



Long Term Monitoring and Management Plan Requirements for 10 year Permits to Dump Maintenance Dredge Material at Sea

The Australian Government has the capacity to grant permits for maintenance dredging for ten years under the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* (the Sea Dumping Act). Ten year permits are available where specific criteria are met.

A Long Term Monitoring and Management Plan (LTMMP) that covers the management of dredging at the port over the life of the permit needs to be submitted along with the permit application and approved by the Department prior to the issuing of the sea dumping permit. Long term monitoring and management will assist ports to plan strategically with respect to environmental management. This can, in turn, identify information gaps to inform future assessments and assist with planning for future port development.

LTMMPs set out both the framework and specific measures for management, mitigation and monitoring of impacts and provide port authorities and other port managers with the opportunity to showcase their role as stewards for the marine environment. With reference to maintenance dredging the LTMMP needs to demonstrate how the environment at the port and surrounds will be protected over the longer term and should identify responsible parties and include mechanisms for the regular review of compliance with permit conditions, as well as a process for continuous improvement of environmental management and performance. While there is no prescribed format, the LTMMP should include the following information:

Introduction/ Background

Overall Environmental Management Framework

The LTMMP should explain how the plan fits within the overall management of the port.

Context

The proposal should be described in the context of the regional and local environment, including a brief history of all dredging and disposal activities. Some information on the Port and its infrastructure should be provided, including a map or diagram showing the location of the port and facilities. .

Information on approvals and policy context

Provide details of relevant State/Commonwealth approvals, conditions and any other statutory requirements. This section should also outline other policies relevant to the management of the port in respect to maintenance dredging activities.

The Port's Sea Dumping Requirements

Description of the dredging and disposal activities

Provide information on dredging and disposal requirements for the life of the plan. This should include the dredging method(s), location of the dredging and disposal sites including where new disposal sites are proposed, timing and any proposed staging of activities. Include maps or diagrams of the respective areas.

Description of the material for disposal

Provide a summary of predicted volumes, sediment types and their contaminant status relevant to the values in the *National Assessment Guidelines for Dredging 2009*.

Description of spoil ground

Provide a description of the spoil ground, including its location and evidence that the spoil ground has sufficient capacity to hold proposed spoil volumes over the ten year period without any negative impacts.

The Environment and Impacts

Description of the existing environment

Characterise the dredging and disposal sites and adjacent areas, including the water column, bathymetry, currents, tides, wind, seabed sediments, climate, turbidity, benthic habitats, marine fauna, sensitive sites; protected areas, matters of National Environmental Significance; fisheries, including recreational, indigenous cultural resources, and other uses (existing and potential) of the area.

Description of potential impacts

Address both potential short-term and long-term impacts and any uncertainties regarding the predicted impacts. As applicable this discussion should include impacts on water quality including turbidity, sediment quality, coral health, marine fauna, marine communities such as seagrass and changes in bathymetry.

Management Measures and Contingencies

Management strategies and actions

Describe strategies and actions to minimise pollution and sea disposal and to mitigate potential impacts – including specific and auditable measures; performance indicators; monitoring requirements (for both the dredge and disposal sites); triggers and responses; corrective actions; and responsibilities and timing for management and monitoring activities. Include an overview of previous monitoring and management activities and their outcomes. Monitoring and environmental studies should focus on understanding the marine environment, how it is impacted (including the scale of impact), and how those impacts can be mitigated or prevented in future. It is recommended that information is provided on how previous long term monitoring (if applicable) has informed the management measures and long term monitoring proposed in the LTMMP.

Contingency planning

Identify corrective actions and contingency plans should undesirable or unforeseen impacts occur. These impacts could be a result of cyclones or other emergencies, other proponents dredging and dumping simultaneously in the near vicinity, future and ongoing developments that could impact on the Port and/or the dredging and dumping activities. Dredging and dumping and future and ongoing developments may cause cumulative impacts that should be considered as part of contingency planning. Contingency measures, where there is a risk that further sediment testing (conducted during the length of the permit) may find sediment unsuitable for unconfined ocean disposal, should be considered.

Sediment Sampling and Analysis

Currency of sediment quality data

The LTMMP should include the objective of maintaining current sediment quality data over the life of the permit. Explain how the currency of sediment quality data will be maintained over the length of the permit given that chemical toxicity data for sediments has a maximum currency of five years.

Departmental approval

An approved Sediment Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP) prepared in accordance with the NAGD and a SAP Report should be submitted as part of the permit application. The LTMMP should include further sediment sampling within a five year period to ensure that sediment characterisation remains valid (in accordance with section 4.2 of the NAGD). Any amendments to an approved SAP should be approved by the Department prior to sampling. Valid sediment testing will also be required prior to the approval of future permits

Where an exemption from further testing has been issued by the Determining Authority, the exemption may be provided in lieu of a SAP.

Auditing requirements and reporting

Auditing and the resulting response to audits, are essential elements of a LTMMP. Outline the reporting and documentation standards, record keeping, process, timing and responsibility for auditing (self and/or independent), monitoring and/or reporting to the department. Outline actions to be implemented in the event of non-compliance, including reporting and revision of the LTMMP, and identify the person or organisation responsible for the actions.

Continuous improvement

One of the objectives of the LTMMP should be continuous improvement over the life of the permit. Identify the mechanisms for continuous improvement to prevent pollution and to mitigate environmental impacts over the longer term. Make provisions for regular review of the management plan, including consultation with the Technical Advisory and Consultative Committee (TACC), to ensure it remains current.

Technical Advisory and Consultative Committee (TACC)

To ensure informed decision-making by port authorities and regulators, the establishment and operation of a TACC is another prerequisite for a 10 year permit. Include an outline of the purpose and objective of the TACC, meeting frequency, consultation processes, quorum requirements and membership.

Publication of the LTMMP

To ensure transparency and stakeholder understanding and acceptance of the environmental management of the port, both the LTMMP and any monitoring or research results derived from it, should be published on the port's website.

Further information

Further information may be obtained from portsandmarine@environment.gov.au