

# WHAT IS MAINTENANCE DREDGING?

## COMMUNITY FACTSHEET



**Gladstone Ports Corporation**

Growth, prosperity, community.



### WHAT IS MAINTENANCE DREDGING?

Dredging involves the removal of sediment from waterways. Sediment is a naturally occurring material, which mainly consists of rock and minerals that are broken down overtime by weathering and erosion, or the remains of plants and animals. Sediment moves throughout waterways due to tides, wind and waves, and settles in quiet areas of the water.

Maintenance dredging is the removal or relocation of sediment that builds up on the seafloor of existing shipping channels to maintain the required depth. This is different to capital dredging, which involves creating new or deeper channels and berths.

### WHY DO PORTS NEED MAINTENANCE DREDGING?

Gladstone Ports Corporation's Port of Gladstone, Port of Bundaberg and Port of Rockhampton are gateways for Australian trade, jobs and prosperity and maintenance dredging plays an essential role in ensuring the safe and efficient operation of our ports continue. Shipping channels are a port's greatest assets and need to be managed to ensure their long-term sustainability.

It is important to maintain shipping channels so vessels can load, manoeuvre and pass through our shipping channels safely and efficiently. Not undertaking maintenance dredging can cause significant safety and economic issues.



### ABOUT GLADSTONE PORTS CORPORATION

Gladstone Ports Corporation is a Government Owned Corporation responsible for supporting and facilitating the trade of Central Queensland's major resource and primary industries.

As custodians of the waterways, we are committed to sustaining our environment as well as ensuring efficient and effective port services.

### MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Sustainable Sediment Management Project, visit [www.gpcl.com.au/ssm-project](http://www.gpcl.com.au/ssm-project).

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## HOW IS SEDIMENT REMOVED AND WHAT HAPPENS TO IT?

Sediment is removed using a trailing suction hopper dredger, which acts like an underwater vacuum. Suction pipes are lowered and trailed over the seafloor to collect a mixture of sands, silts and clays, which is pumped into the 'hopper' or hold of the vessel. The sediment is then transferred to an approved site.

GPC's Sustainable Sediment Management Project is currently reviewing the way maintenance dredging is undertaken in our ports. We are engaging and collaborating with a diverse group of stakeholders and specialists to identify possible sediment management options and determine the feasibility of these options.

## DOES MAINTENANCE DREDGING HARM THE ENVIRONMENT?

Dredging is highly regulated and subject to strict State and Commonwealth Government legislation to ensure dredging activities are managed in an environmentally responsible manner.

Government agencies require all potential environmental impacts to be investigated and mitigation measures identified before any permits or approvals are granted.

As two of GPC's ports lie within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, our Sustainable Sediment Management Project aligns with Commonwealth and the State Government's Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan. The project also delivers obligations from the Deed of Agreement between GPC and government for the Port of Gladstone, Port of Rockhampton and Port of Bundaberg, which reinforces our commitment to responsibly manage maintenance dredging to minimise environmental impacts and investigate alternatives to sea disposal for the sediments dredged.

