

Media Statement

11 May 2026

No EPA assessment for Pilbara Ports bypass navigation channel

The State waters component of a Pilbara Ports proposal to dredge a bypass channel will not be formally assessed by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

The new navigation channel to the east of the existing shipping lane is proposed as a vessel contingency should a grounding incident occur in the Port Hedland main channel.

EPA Chair Darren Walsh said that following a recent public comment period, the independent Authority had decided that the likely environmental effects of the proposal were not so significant or unmitigated as to warrant formal assessment under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

Mr Walsh said that while no submissions were received during the recent public comment period, the EPA had conducted its own inquiries.

“Cumulative impacts were considered to ensure the project would not affect marine environmental quality,” he said. “Given the short five-week duration and limited extent of dredging activities, no adverse long-term impacts to benthic habitats are expected in a cumulative context.”

The EPA determination not to assess the proposal, [published today](#), notes that the loading and transport of dredged material from State waters is regulated by the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water through a permit under the *Environmental Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981*.

“In our decision the EPA acknowledges that any assessment of sea dumping permits considers the quality of dredged material, suitability of disposal location, the extent of potential impacts, and the measures required to monitor and minimise those impacts,” Mr Walsh added.

Mr Walsh and several other EPA members visited Pilbara Port Authority operations last year and viewed the early modelling and analysis work being done on the bypass dredging proposal.

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