

Shute Harbour Boating Facility

Application Number: **03461**

Commencement Date:
22/05/2026

Status: **Locked**

1. About the project

1.1 Project details

1.1.1 Project title *

Shute Harbour Boating Facility

1.1.2 Project industry type *

Transport - Water

1.1.3 Project industry sub-type

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1.1.4 Estimated start date *

01/12/2026

1.1.4 Estimated end date *

30/09/2028

1.2 Proposed Action details

1.2.1 Provide an overview of the proposed action, including all proposed activities. *

Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) is proposing upgrades, and expansion works to existing recreational boating infrastructure at Shute Harbour (the Project) to accommodate increasing boating demand within the Whitsunday region and improve key limitations associated with the existing facility.

For the purpose of this referral the Project Area is located within Unallocated State Land (USL) and is bound by the following:

- Eastern side is bound by land lease ACP849951 and Lot 310 CP849951. Further east consists of the existing Shute Harbour boat ramp and Shute Harbour Marine Terminal
- Western side by Lot 252 and 301 on HR1717 consisting of a maritime commercial facility. Further west consists of the adjacent embayment where the approved coordinated project Shute Harbour Marina will be developed.
- Northern side by state-controlled road Shute Harbour Road. Further North consists of a logistics shipping facility and Conway Conservation and National Park
- Southern side by land lease Lot 23 on SP20807

The proposed works include construction of a four-lane boat ramp, associated floating walkways, revetment wall, a car park, and associated navigational access channel. This will occur adjacent to existing maritime infrastructure at Shute Harbour and will require some reclamation works for the carpark footprint. Dredging is required for the project to establish the navigational access channel as well as to excavate the foundations of the outer wall for the reclamation.

The Project Area including the proposed infrastructure footprint (23,362 m²) and dredging channel for navigational access (with an offset of 5 m with a total area of 5,739 m²). The Study Area comprises a nominal 5 m buffer surrounding the Project Area with a total area of 35,060 m².

An image showing the location of the Project Area is provided in Attachment '**R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral**', **Section 1.3 (Existing Environment)**, **Figure 1.1, page 10**.

An image showing the concept design of the Project is provided in Attachment '**R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral**', **Section 1.4 (Project Description)**, **Figure 1.2, page 12**.

The proposed construction and operational works that are subject to this referral for the Project include:

Construction:

- Construction of a four-lane boat ramp with two floating walkways and a revetment wall protecting a reclaimed carpark accommodating 130 car trailer units (CTU) bays
- Capital dredging up to ~40,000 m³ to allow navigational access for the boat ramp and stabilisation of the revetment wall. ~ 27,000 m³ of dredging is associated with revetment construction, and 12,000 m³ dredging associated with the navigational access channel
- Connection to the Shute Harbour Road including a roundabout and extension of the existing stormwater culvert via easement AHR1907 through the reclaimed area

The general construction sequencing is expected to be as follows:

- Capital dredging will be undertaken using a barge mounted cutter suction dredger (CSD) or a backhoe dredge (excavator sitting on advancing revetment wall or barge). Capital dredging for the foundation of revetment structures, with material either placed immediately into trucks for offsite disposal or placed onshore in contained stockpiles or geobags (or similar containment structures) for dewatering and either retained on site as part of reclamation works or taken offsite after some level of dewatering. Dredged material generated during the Project will be managed in accordance with its physical and chemical characteristics and relevant regulatory requirements.
- Navigational access channel dredging will occur through the same material management methodology as dredging for the revetment wall foundations described above.
- Construction of the outer revetment of the reclamation, progressing generally west to east. The Project will likely utilise land based plant for the placement of rocks. Rocks would be loaded to

revetment working face from an onsite stockpile which in turn would be fed by truck movements from nearby quarries. Sand required for reclamation and surcharging purposes is anticipated to be sourced from either a suitable nearby quarry or a suitable sandy dredge material stockpile managed by MSQ (ie., Bowen State Boat Harbour). If considered feasible, barging activities associated with sand surcharge material (approximately 40,000 m³) will be required for the reclaimed carpark.

- Progressive filling of the reclamation and dewatering of retained seawater via a weirbox or similar.
- Construction of the boat ramp infrastructure comprising of precast concrete ramp panels placed onto a support base. The ramp may be supported on piles (up to 50 piles), or alternatively by localised removal of soft sediments and replacement with engineered rock fill, or other foundation treatments to provide a stable base.
- Civil works for the carpark including stormwater extension of the existing culverts and associated road works. Preliminary design have considered the primary waterway crossings within the Project Area, including multiple circular culverts of varying diameters, to ensure that existing drainage performance is maintained.

Reclamation, associated civil works and boat ramp will result in the removal of approximately 0.2535 ha of mangroves, 0.0981 ha of sparse seagrass and macroalgae, and 0.0361 ha of macroalgae and sponge habitat, and the removal of three isolated coral colonies.

The dredging footprint has been defined based on the access requirements for trailerable recreational vessels and comprises an area incorporating a +5 m offset, totaling approximately (0.57 ha). This footprint represents the minimum area required to establish safe navigational access to the boat ramp. As a result, 0.029 ha of macroalgae and sponge habitat (5-30% cover) and 0.394 ha of sparse seagrass and macroalgae habitat (1–5% cover) is expected to be removed.

Operations:

- Future maintenance dredging may be required to maintain navigational access to the boat ramp. Sedimentation modelling indicates low rates of channel infill (approximately 60–120 mm/year, equivalent to 300–500 m³/year), with sedimentation largely confined to the navigation channel. Consistent with the predicted low sedimentation rates, maintenance dredging is expected to be infrequent (potentially less than 5,000 m³ at intervals of approximately 8–10 years), subject to operational monitoring and navigational requirements. If required, maintenance dredging would be undertaken using small-scale dredging methods similar to those proposed for the capital dredging campaign.

Summary of Proposed Activities

The Project will involve marine, intertidal and terrestrial disturbance activities associated with construction and operation of the proposed Project. Key disturbance activities and associated environmental impact pathways include:

- **Navigational access channel capital dredging** (~12,000 m³) over a total area of approximately 0.57 ha, which will directly impact marine habitats through the removal of approximately 0.394 ha of sparse seagrass and macroalgae habitat (1-5% cover) and 0.029 ha of macroalgae and sponge habitat (5-30% cover).
- **Revetment foundation capital dredging and revetment wall construction** (~27,000 m³) over a total area of approximately 0.24 ha, which will directly impact marine habitats through dredging activities and placement of permanent coastal protection infrastructure, resulting in the removal of approximately 0.0135 ha of macroalgae and sponge habitat (5-30% cover).
- **Reclamation works and associated civil infrastructure** over a total area of approximately 1.8 ha, which will directly impact intertidal and marine habitats through land reclamation, resulting in the removal of approximately 0.2535 ha of mangroves, 0.0981 ha of sparse seagrass and macroalgae habitat, 0.0361 ha of macroalgae and sponge habitat, and three isolated coral colonies.

- **Construction of the boat ramp and floating walkways** over a total area of approximately 0.19 ha, which will directly impact marine habitats through the placement of permanent marine infrastructure, resulting in the removal of approximately 0.02 ha of low-density macroalgae and sparse seagrass habitat.
- **Dredged material handling, stockpiling, dewatering and potential acid sulfate soil management** may temporarily impact water quality through sediment resuspension, treatment of excavated marine sediments and controlled discharge of retained seawater associated with reclamation activities.
- **Piling activities** may temporarily impact marine fauna through underwater noise and vibration generated during construction.
- **Construction vessel movements, material transport and potential barging activities** may temporarily impact the marine environment through underwater noise, vessel interactions with marine fauna and accidental spill risks associated with construction activities.
- **Future maintenance dredging** may periodically impact seabed habitats and water quality through localised sediment disturbance required to maintain navigational access to the facility.

For further detail on the Project description including construction and operational works, see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 1.4 (Project Description), page 11 to 16.**

For further detail on the habitats within the Project Area, see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 4.3 (Habitats), page 28 to 36.**

For further detail on direct impacts of the proposed Project, see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 5.1 (Direct Impacts), page 60.**

For further detail on indirect impacts of the proposed Project, see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 5.2 (Indirect Impacts), page 60 to 68.**

For further detail on cumulative impacts of the proposed Project, see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 5.3 (Cumulative Impacts), page 68 to 69.**

1.2.2 Is the project action part of a staged development or related to other actions or proposals in the region?

No

1.2.6 What Commonwealth or state legislation, planning frameworks or policy documents are relevant to the proposed action, and how are they relevant? *

The relevant Commonwealth legislation to the Project is the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Given the Project's proximity within an Australian marine area and its potential to impact Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), the Project will be referred under the EPBC Act for a determination as to whether it constitutes a controlled action. Relevant EPBC Act-related policy and guidance documents include the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), which have been used to assess the likelihood of significant impact on MNES.

Marine Parks

Advice provided on 16 January 2026 from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and from the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) on 21 January 2026 confirms a Marine Park Permit application was not deemed applicable as the Project Area is not within the Commonwealth or State Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

For detailed information on application of Marine Parks, see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 2.3 (Marine Park Permit), page 19 to 20.**

State Approvals

In addition to consideration under the EPBC Act, the State government has introduced legislative amendments to accelerate the planning and delivery of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games venues. Under amendments to the *Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021* (Qld) (BOPGA Act), the proposed Project has been identified as Games-related infrastructure to support the Olympic Sailing in the Whitsundays and is therefore “deemed to comply” with most State development approval requirements that would otherwise apply under the *Planning Act 2016* (Planning Act) (Qld) and associated legislation.

The relevant “deemed to comply” provisions are established under Chapter 3A – *Provisions for Facilitating Development for the Games*, Part 2, Section 53DC(1)(b)(ii), which applies to Games-related transport infrastructure. Schedule 4, Part 2 of the BOPGA Act specifically identifies the proposed Shute Harbour recreational boating facility and associated transport upgrades as eligible infrastructure, including:

a) New public marine transport infrastructure at Shute Harbour associated with the following-

- A new multi lane boat ramp
- A new breakwater
- New floating walkways
- An upgraded car-trailer parking area
- Upgraded State-controlled roads, local government roads and active transport infrastructure associated with the paragraph (a).

Notwithstanding the “deemed to comply” provisions under the BOPGA Act, the proposed works would otherwise be expected to trigger a range of approvals under Queensland planning and environmental legislation, including:

- Owners Consent—required under s51 under the Planning Act for works on premises that are on premises-water mark as defined under the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995* (Qld) (Coastal Act)
- Environmental Authority— ERA 16(1)(b) dredging more than 10,000t but not more than 100,000t per year
- Material Change of Use (MCU)—required under Schedule 10, Part 5, Division 2, s8 a material change of use is required for an activity that is a concurrence ERA including ERA 16(1)(b)
- Allocation of Quarry Material—dredging activities resulting in the removal of material from land under tidal water and disposed of above high-water mark under the Coastal Act
- Development Permit under the *Planning Regulation 2017* (Qld), for the following activities:

- Coastal development and tidal works— Construction of boat ramp, breakwater and dredging will likely be tidal works and require a development permit
- Marine plant disturbance – Permit required under s123 of the *Fisheries Act 1994* (Qld) for any disturbance to marine plants within or adjacent to Project

MSQ acknowledges that while formal approvals may not be required under the BOPGA Act, the environmental outcomes and mitigation measures ordinarily associated with those approvals remain relevant and will continue to inform project delivery.

MSQ operates under the key legislation instrument of the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994* (Qld). Section 9 (a) (i) and (iii) of this Act under Obligations about Government supported transport infrastructure states.

“The chief executive must ensure that -

- *(a) the construction, maintenance and operation of all government supported transport infrastructure for which the chief executive is responsible is carried out in a way that, within the objective of this chapter –*
- *(i) takes into account best practice and national benchmarks; and*
- *(iii) reduces adverse environmental impacts”*

In order to meet the above obligation regardless of BOPGA Act inclusion MSQ has completed all the necessary supporting documentation and Environmental Management Plan's (EMPs) that are required to support the development assessment under the “deemed to comply” state environmental legislation listed above. An independent assessment process will be undertaken to verify that environmental outcomes consistent with those ordinarily achieved through the relevant State approval processes have been appropriately addressed prior to construction commencing.

The summary of legislative context of the Project is included in **Attachment ‘R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral’, Section 2 (Legislative Context), page 17 to 20.**

1.2.7 Describe any public consultation that has been, is being or will be undertaken regarding the project area, including with Indigenous stakeholders. Attach any completed consultation documentations, if relevant. *

Consultation under the Queensland Recreational Boating Facilities Demand Forecasting Study (BMT 2022)

The *Queensland Recreational Boating Facilities Demand Forecasting Study (2022)– Whitsunday LGA Assessment (2025 update)* (BMT(2022)) which included public engagement recommended a significant increase in boat ramp capacity and associated car parking in Shute Harbour via a 130 Car Trailer Unit (CTU) reclamation and new 4 lane boat ramp. This recommended option BMT (2022) was published on TMR's website Whitsunday - Recreational Boating Facilities Demand Forecasting Study 2022 - Publications | Queensland Government with the proposed development shown in concept see below reproduction. This recommended development was subsequently announced as a State election commitment in October 2024.

The Project has therefore previously been subject to public consideration through both the Recreational Boating Facilities Demand Forecasting Study process and subsequent public announcement of the State election commitment. Broader consultation is now being progressed as the design footprint has become sufficiently developed to support meaningful stakeholder engagement and informed feedback on the proposed works.

Geotechnical constraints of the site have represented a significant challenge to the development of the feasible concept layout and for this reason broader public consultation was delayed until there were firm details to discuss. Particularly given the public was already aware of the announced development elements of the Project from the published Demand Forecasting Study and the election commitment. MSQ intends to undertake broader community and stakeholder consultation now that the feasible concept design footprint has been established. Feedback obtained through this process will be considered, in the detailed design development and final planning stages

Consultation on the Project

Consultation and stakeholder engagement for the proposed action has involved a range of government agencies, Indigenous stakeholders, adjacent commercial operators and other key parties. Engagement has occurred through formal and informal meetings, correspondence and ongoing liaison during the early concept development, site investigation and preliminary design phases, and will continue throughout detailed design, approvals and construction activities.

The Project has undertaken consultation and engagement with the following stakeholders:

Indigenous Stakeholders

Consultation has occurred with the local Gia and Ngaro Peoples regarding cultural heritage and Native Title matters. A Cultural Heritage Risk Assessment was completed and approved by MSQ on 17 January 2025, with a further cultural heritage field assessment undertaken on 7 July 2026 with representatives of the Gia and Ngaro Peoples and the Department's Cultural Heritage Officer prior to any ground disturbance works. Under the *Native Title Act 1993* (NT Act), a Notification Form A was issued to the North Queensland Land Council acting on behalf of the Gia and Ngaro Peoples in relation to site investigation works undertaken under Section 24KA of the NT Act. No response was received to the notification. A further notification will be issued at least one month prior to the commencement of construction activities.

Government Agencies and Local Authorities

MSQ has undertaken ongoing consultation with Whitsunday Regional Council, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (Mackay District), and the Regional Harbour Master regarding the development of the Project, including site investigations, navigational considerations and preliminary design activities.

Adjacent Commercial Operators and Industry Stakeholders

Consultation has also occurred with adjacent commercial operators and industry stakeholders, including Shute Harbour Wharf Operations, Coral Coast Engineering, Hamilton Island Barge Operations and Logistics Centre, and local quarry operators including Foxdale and Hillery, regarding operational interfaces, logistics and potential construction requirements associated with the Project.

Consultation commenced during the planning and early design phases of the Project and remains ongoing. Stakeholder engagement will continue throughout detailed design, approvals and delivery phases to ensure relevant stakeholders are informed of Project developments and that stakeholder feedback is considered, where relevant, in the ongoing refinement of the Project.

1.3.1 Identity: Referring party

Privacy Notice:

Personal information means information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

By completing and submitting this form, you consent to the collection of all personal information contained in this form. If you are providing the personal information of other individuals in this form, please ensure you have their consent before doing so.

The National Environmental Protection Agency (the agency) collects your personal information (as defined by the Privacy Act 1988) through this platform for the purposes of enabling the agency to consider your submission and contact you in relation to your submission. If you fail to provide some or all of the personal information requested on this platform (name and email address), the agency will be unable to contact you to seek further information (if required) and subsequently may impact the consideration given to your submission.

Personal information may be disclosed to other Australian government agencies, persons or organisations where necessary for the above purposes, provided the disclosure is consistent with relevant laws, in particular the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act). Your personal information will be used and stored in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles.

See our Privacy Policy to learn more about accessing or correcting personal information or making a complaint. Alternatively, email us at Privacy@NationalEPA.gov.au.

☒ **Confirm that you have read and understand this Privacy Notice ***

1.3.1.1 Is Referring party an organisation or business? *

Yes

Referring party organisation details

ABN/ACN	54010830421
Organisation name	BMT COMMERCIAL AUSTRALIA PTY LTD
Organisation address	4000 QLD

Referring party details

Name	Mackenzie Stacey
Job title	Senior Environmental Consultant
Phone	0477926858
Email	mackenzie.stacey@apac.bmt.org
Address	Level 5/248 Edward Street

1.3.2 Identity: Person proposing to take the action

1.3.2.1 Are the Person proposing to take the action details the same as the Referring party details? *

No

1.3.2.2 Is Person proposing to take the action an organisation or business? *

Yes

Person proposing to take the action organisation details

ABN/ACN	39407690291
Organisation name	Department of Transport and Main Roads, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)
Organisation address	4000 QLD

Person proposing to take the action details

Name	Chris Voisey
Job title	Project Manager
Phone	0455088382
Email	chris.j.voisey@msq.qld.gov.au
Address	Floor 4/ 61 Mary Street, Brisbane Qld 4000

1.3.2.14 Are you proposing the action as part of a Joint Venture? *

No

1.3.2.15 Are you proposing the action as part of a Trust? *

No

1.3.2.17 Describe the Person proposing the action's history of responsible environmental management including details of any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against the Person proposing to take the action. *

The person proposing the action (PPA) is MSQ/TMR a Queensland Government Owned Entity, and as the PPA is the proponent of the broader Shute Harbour Boating Facility (the Project) and will continue in this role for the purpose of constructing the Project. MSQ would retain ownership and management responsibility of all maritime infrastructure but would transfer the carpark asset to Whitsunday Regional Council to manage. This is consistent with existing arrangements for other boat ramps in the State. MSQ has no history of adverse proceedings under Commonwealth, State, or Territory laws relating to environmental protection or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Additionally, MSQ has previously and successfully delivered Projects and maintenance of maritime infrastructure in accordance with relevant Commonwealth, State, and Territory legislation.

1.3.2.18 If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework

MSQ as part of Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) is not a corporation.

DTMR recognizes the need for environmental compliance as part of its core business and has an Environmental Sustainability Policy, refer to Attachment '**DTMR Environmental Sustainability Policy.pdf**'. This policy requires TMR to undertake environmental management activities to support environmental conservation through corporate strategies, documents, assessments, and continual oversight.

DTMR implements its Environmental Management System (EMS) in accordance with the *Environmental Processes Manual* (EPM), which is publicly available on the Department's website- www.tmr.qld.gov.au/business-industry/Technicalstandards-publications/Environmental-processes-manual.

The EPM is based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act framework outlined in AS/NZS ISO 14001:2016 and provides a scalable and adaptable approach to environmental management across all DTMR projects. In addition, DTMR applies its Technical Standards (MRTS suite), which are developed in accordance with relevant State and Commonwealth legislative requirements. Together, these documents provide the framework for environmental management throughout project planning, design, construction and operation, and are publicly available through the DTMR website.

1.3.3 Identity: Proposed designated proponent

1.3.3.1 Are the Proposed designated proponent details the same as the Person proposing to take the action? *

Yes

Proposed designated proponent organisation details	
ABN/ACN	39407690291
Organisation name	Department of Transport and Main Roads, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)
Organisation address	4000 QLD
Proposed designated proponent details	
Name	Chris Voisey
Job title	Project Manager
Phone	0455088382
Email	chris.j.voisey@msq.qld.gov.au
Address	Floor 4/ 61 Mary Street, Brisbane Qld 4000

1.3.4 Identity: Summary of allocation

✔ Confirmed Referring party's identity

The Referring party is the person preparing the information in this referral.

ABN/ACN	54010830421
Organisation name	BMT COMMERCIAL AUSTRALIA PTY LTD
Organisation address	4000 QLD
Representative's name	Mackenzie Stacey
Representative's job title	Senior Environmental Consultant
Phone	0477926858
Email	mackenzie.stacey@apac.bmt.org
Address	Level 5/248 Edward Street

✔ Confirmed Person proposing to take the action's identity

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual, business, government agency or trustee that will be responsible for the proposed action.

ABN/ACN	39407690291
Organisation name	Department of Transport and Main Roads, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)
Organisation address	4000 QLD
Representative's name	Chris Voisey
Representative's job title	Project Manager
Phone	0455088382
Email	chris.j.voisey@msq.qld.gov.au
Address	Floor 4/ 61 Mary Street, Brisbane Qld 4000

✔ Confirmed Proposed designated proponent's identity

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual or organisation proposed to be responsible for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act during the assessment process, if the Minister decides that this project is a controlled action.

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

1.4 Payment details: Payment exemption and fee waiver

1.4.1 Do you qualify for an exemption from fees under EPBC Regulation 5.23 (1) (a)? *

No

1.4.3 Have you applied for or been granted a waiver for full or partial fees under Regulation 5.21A? *

No

1.4.5 Are you going to apply for a waiver of full or partial fees under EPBC Regulation 5.21A?

No

1.4.7 Has the department issued you with a credit note? *

No

1.4.9 Would you like to add a purchase order number to your invoice? *

No

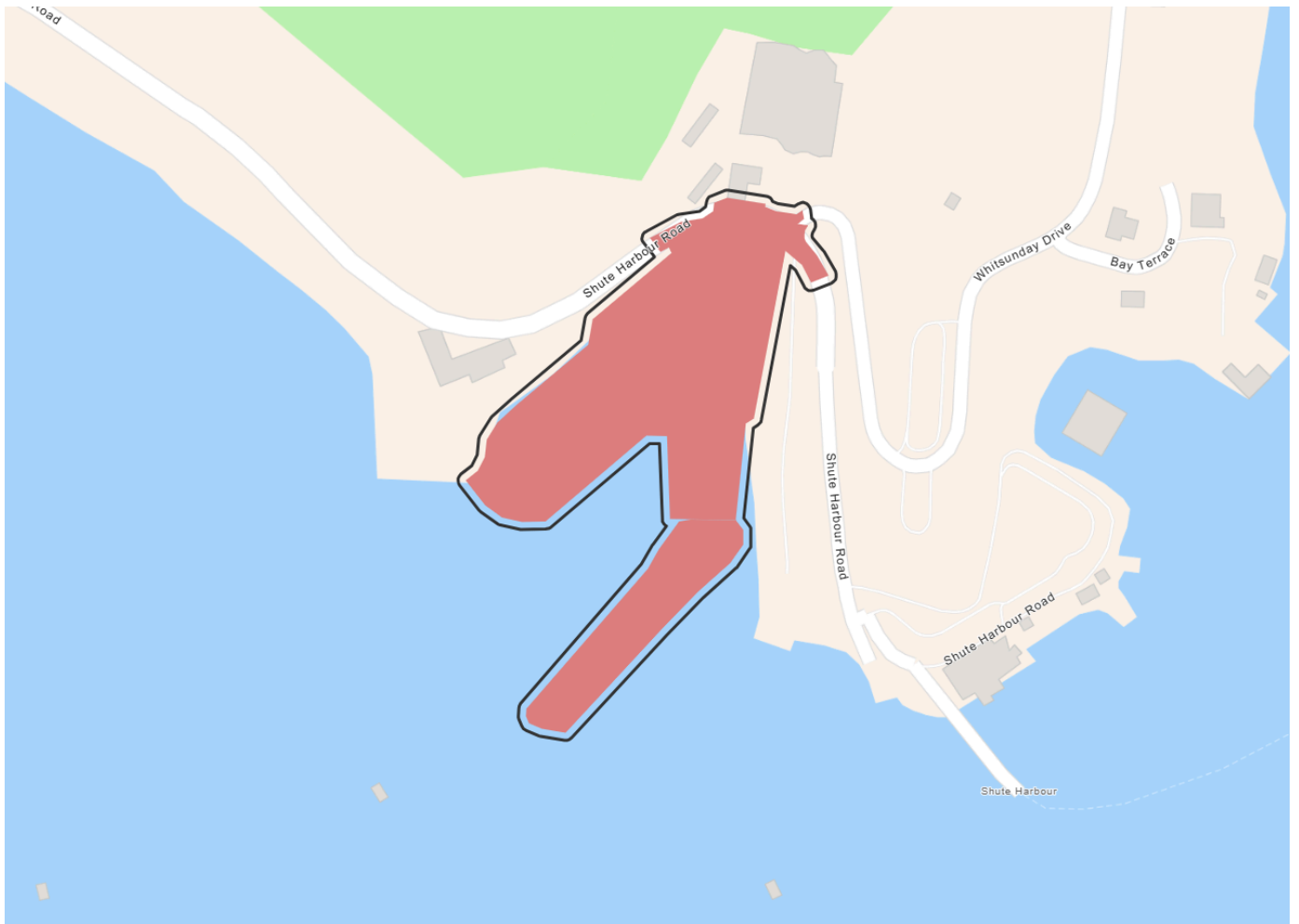
1.4 Payment details: Payment allocation

1.4.11 Who would you like to allocate as the entity responsible for payment? *

Person proposing to take the action

2. Location

2.1 Project footprint



Project Area: 3.52 Ha Disturbance Footprint: 2.92 Ha

2.2 Footprint details

2.2.1 What is the address of the proposed action? *

Shute Harbour Dr near Whitsunday Dr, Shute Harbour QLD 4802

2.2.2 Where is the primary jurisdiction of the proposed action? *

Queensland

2.2.3 Is there a secondary jurisdiction for this proposed action? *

No

2.2.5 What is the tenure of the action area relevant to the project area? *

The Project is located within Unallocated State Land (USL) adjacent to:

- Eastern side is bound by land lease ACP849951 and freehold Lot 310 CP849951. Further east consists of the existing Shute Harbour boat ramp and Shute Harbour Marine Terminal
- Western side by Lot 252 and 301 on HR1717 (freehold) consisting of a maritime commercial facility. Further west consists of the adjacent embayment where the approved coordinated project Shute Harbour Marina will be developed.
- Northern side by state-controlled road Shute Harbour Road. Further North consists of a logistics shipping facility (freehold 22SP165670) and easement AHR1907 and Conway Conservation and National Park
- Southern side by land lease Lot 23 on SP20807

The traditional owners of the land and marine areas are the Gia and Ngaro Peoples.

3. Existing environment

3.1 Physical description

3.1.1 Describe the current condition of the project area's environment.

The Project Area is located within Unallocated State Land (USL) in a modified section of Shute Harbour, approximately 10 km east of Airlie Beach, within a semi-enclosed coastal embayment that forms part of the Whitsunday region and provides connectivity between the mainland, the Whitsunday Islands and the Great Barrier Reef. The broader Shute Harbour area comprises a mosaic of terrestrial, intertidal and marine environments typical of the Whitsunday coastline, including mangrove forests, intertidal mudflats, seagrass meadows and subtidal soft sediment habitats. Surrounding Shute Harbour are steep, vegetated hillslopes associated with Conway National Park, which extend to the foreshore and influence local runoff and sediment inputs during rainfall events.

Marine conditions within the broader Shute Harbour area are relatively sheltered from regional swell due to the presence of surrounding islands, reefs and shallow bathymetry, and are typically characterised by low-energy, wind-driven wave conditions. Water movement is tidally driven and influenced by seasonal rainfall, resulting in natural variability in turbidity and sediment resuspension across the embayment. Shute Harbour supports a range of uses, including commercial ferry operations, recreational boating and tourism activities, resulting in a high level of existing disturbance within parts of the system

The Project Area is not zoned under the Whitsunday Regional Council Planning Scheme, but is bound by:

- Eastern side is bound by land lease ACP849951 and Lot 310 CP849951 (zoned as community facilities). Further east consists of the existing Shute Harbour boat ramp and Shute Harbour Marine Terminal (zoned as community facilities)
- Western side by Lot 252 and 301 on HR1717 consisting of a maritime commercial facility (zoned as mixed use). Further west consists of the adjacent embayment where the approved coordinated project Shute Harbour Marina (zoned as community facilities) will be developed.
- Northern side by state-controlled road Shute Harbour Road. Further North consists of a logistics shipping facility (zoned as industry investigation area) and Conway Conservation and National Park (zoned as Environmental management and conservation)
- Southern side by marine lease Lot 23 on SP20807 (zoned as community facilities)

The Project Area has been substantially altered by existing infrastructure, including rock revetments along the eastern and western boundaries, adjacent maritime facilities associated with the ferry terminal and boat ramp precinct, and Shute Harbour Road to the north. These features have modified the natural shoreline and coastal processes, resulting in a disturbed and fragmented local environment.

Landward areas adjacent to the Project Area are similarly disturbed and comprise roadside embankments, access corridors and areas of informal vehicle parking associated with recreational boating activity. There are no dedicated pedestrian or cycling facilities within the immediate road reserve, and during peak usage periods, parking demand extends along Shute Harbour Road beyond the immediate vicinity of the site.

Severe weather events have influenced the condition of the Shute Harbour area, most notably Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie in 2017, which made landfall in the Whitsunday region as a Category 4 system. The cyclone directly impacted Shute Harbour, resulting in extensive damage to built infrastructure and marine facilities, including the destruction of pontoons and displacement of vessels within Shute Harbour.

In addition, the broader catchment remains subject to periodic flooding associated with intense rainfall, with sections of the Proserpine–Shute Harbour Road corridor known to be flood-prone and periodically inaccessible during major rainfall events. No specific recent bushfire events have been identified as directly affecting the Project Area, with the immediate surrounding land categorized as low bushfire risk under the Whitsunday Bushfire Management Plan 2020-2030. However, the surrounding vegetated hillslopes (ie., Conway National Park) are recognised as having bushfire risk consistent with regional conditions.

For an overarching description (that is discussed further in this referral), see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 1.3 (Existing Environment), page 8 to 9.**

3.1.2 Describe any existing or proposed uses for the project area.

The Project Area is located within Unallocated State Land (USL) and is not subject to local government planning zoning. Surrounding land uses include industrial, mixed-use and community facility areas, with no additional or alternative land uses currently proposed as part of the Project.

3.1.3 Describe any outstanding natural features and/or any other important or unique values that applies to the project area.

Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)

A search of the Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) under the EPBC Act identified the following MNES relevant to the Project Area:

- **World Heritage Areas and National Heritage Places**— Approximately ~4,606 m² of the navigational access channel area and approximately 1,800 m² of the infrastructure area (reclamation/revetment and boat ramp) is located within the mapped boundaries of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) and Great Barrier Reef National Heritage Place (GBRNHP) with the majority of the Project adjacent to the boundaries. For the purposes of this assessment, the GBRWHA and GBRNHP are considered to represent the same spatial extent and broadly reflect similar natural heritage values. Accordingly, the GBRWHA is considered the most relevant controlling provision, and the assessment findings in relation to the GBRWHA are applicable to the GBRNHP.
- **Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs)**—The PMST search identified the potential presence of Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Vine Thickets of Eastern Australia (Critically Endangered) and Broad leaf tea-tree (*Melaleuca viridiflora*) woodlands in high rainfall coastal north Queensland (Endangered) within the Project Area. Field surveys and review of mapped regional ecosystems confirmed that neither TEC occurs within the Project Area or immediately adjacent. The Project Area does not contain the vegetation structure, floristic composition or habitat characteristics required to support these TECs.
- **Listed Threatened Species**—The PMST search identified 40 listed threatened species that are likely or may occur within, or in proximity to, the Project Area.
- **Listed Migratory Species**—The PMST search identified 45 listed migratory species relevant to the Project Area.

See **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 4 (Matters of National Environmental Significance), page 26 to 58** for further information on each of these MNES.

Potential impacts to these MNES are also further discussed in Section 4 of this referral and in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 5 (Potential Impacts and Mitigation) page 59 to 68**.

This assessment follows the Significant Impact Guidelines under the EPBC Act, with further details provided in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 6 (Significant Impact Assessment) page 69 to 84**.

No significant impacts to MNES are expected as a result of the Project. The Project will be managed in accordance with the national assessment process under the requirements of the EPBC Act.

3.1.4 Describe the gradient (or depth range if action is to be taken in a marine area) relevant to the project area.

The Project Area comprises a shallow embayment, with seabed levels ranging from approximately 1.78 m LAT in nearshore areas to around -1.02 m LAT adjacent to Lot 23 SP20807 to the south of the Project Area. Marine-based works, including capital dredging associated with the navigational channel is expected to be to dredging depths of -1.5 m LAT. Future maintenance dredging is to be undertaken to maintain depths of -0.5 m LAT.

3.2 Flora and fauna

3.2.1 Describe the flora and fauna within the affected area and attach any investigations of surveys if applicable.

Ecological assessments have been undertaken across the Project Area, encompassing both terrestrial and marine environments. These assessments were informed by desktop analysis, including a 2026 PMST search and site-specific ecological surveys conducted in 2026. Key findings are summarised below.

Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs)

The PMST search identified the potential presence of Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Vine Thickets of Eastern Australia (Critically Endangered) and Broad leaf tea-tree (*Melaleuca viridiflora*) woodlands in high rainfall coastal north Queensland (Endangered) within the Project Area. Field surveys and review of mapped regional ecosystems confirmed that neither TEC occurs within the Project Area or immediately adjacent. The Project Area does not contain the vegetation structure, floristic composition or habitat characteristics required to support these TECs.

Terrestrial and Marine Flora

Terrestrial and marine vegetation within the Project Area is predominantly disturbed and modified, reflecting its location within an active maritime and transport corridor. The intertidal embayment supports a fragmented and discontinuous mangrove fringe, occurring along the embayment margins and associated drainage features, consistent with sheltered, low-energy coastal environments. Mangrove communities consist of *Rhizophora stylosa*, with occasional occurrences of *Avicennia marina*, *Rhizophora apiculata* and *Excoecaria agallocha*. The upper banks support highly disturbed coastal vegetation including exotic grasses, vines, ornamental plantings and invasive shrubs, with scattered native canopy species and small patches of coastal woodland and sea hibiscus (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*). Coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*).

The PMST search identified three listed threatened plant species that could potentially occur within the Project Area, being *Brachychiton compactus*, *Lastreopsis tenera* (Broad shield fern) and *Phlegmariurus squarrosus* (Square tassel fern; listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act). However, based on the Project Area characteristics, field surveys and desktop assessment, these species are considered unlikely to be present due to the absence of suitable habitat.

The Project Area is otherwise characterised by intertidal mudflat and soft sediment substrates, which are largely unvegetated but do consist of sparse and patchy occurrences of marine vegetation, including seagrass and macroalgae at low densities.

Birds

The PMST identified a range of threatened and migratory bird species with the potential to occur within the Project Area. Based on habitat availability and field surveys, several migratory shorebirds (waders) are considered possible to occur, including curlew sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*), eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*), bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica baueri*), sharp-tailed sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*), red knot (*Calidris canutus*), greater sand plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*), Latham's snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) and whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*). These species are associated with intertidal environments and may utilise the Project Area for foraging, given the presence of marginal intertidal habitat within the embayment.

In addition, other migratory species are considered possible to occur, including little tern (*Sternula albifrons*), fork-tailed swift (*Apus pacificus*) and eastern osprey (*Pandion haliaetus cristatus*). However, these species are more likely to use the Project Area intermittently as a temporary stopover or resting area while moving between higher-value habitats, rather than as a key foraging area.

No breeding or roosting sites for any listed bird species have been recorded within the Project Area.

Mammals

The PMST identified several threatened and migratory mammal species with potential to occur within the Project Area. Large migratory cetaceans, including humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), are considered unlikely to occur within the shallow and sheltered waters of Shute Harbour. In contrast, dolphin

species such as the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (*Sousa sahulensis*) and Australian snubfin dolphin (*Orcaella heinsohni*) may utilise shallow, protected coastal environments and could occur within or adjacent to the Project Area on a transient basis.

The dugong (*Dugong dugon*) is known to occur within the broader Whitsunday region; however, it is highly dependent on extensive, persistent seagrass meadows for foraging. Seagrass within the Project Area occurs only as small, fragmented patches at very low densities and does not represent a functionally significant feeding resource. Accordingly, dugongs, if present, would be expected to occur only occasionally and on a transient basis.

The water mouse (*Xeromys myoides*) may also occur given the presence of mangrove and intertidal habitats; however, these areas provide only marginal foraging and nesting habitat, and no evidence of occupancy was recorded during field surveys.

Reptiles

A number of marine reptile species were identified in the PMST search as having the potential to occur within the Project Area. These include marine turtles such as the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), flatback turtle (*Natator depressus*), hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), and leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*). However, while these species may occur within or adjacent to the Project Area, habitat suitability is limited due to the absence of extensive reef or seagrass habitats, which are critical for feeding and lifecycle requirements. Seagrass within the Project Area is sparse, fragmented and low in density, and therefore does not represent an important foraging resource. Accordingly, marine turtles are expected to occur only occasionally and on a transient basis, rather than utilising the area as important habitat.

The saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) may also occur within the Project Area, given its association with estuarine and coastal environments. While no established populations are present locally, the Project Area lies within the broader distribution of the species and may be utilised on a transient basis.

Fish and Sharks

The nearshore marine environment of the Project Area may provide suitable habitat for a limited number of conservation significant fish and shark species. In particular, the narrow sawfish (*Anoxypristis cuspidata*) and green sawfish (*Pristis zijsron*) may occur within or adjacent to the Project Area, given their known association with shallow coastal waters, estuaries and muddy or sandy substrates. These species may utilise the area during certain life stages or tidal conditions; however, habitat quality within the Project Area is limited, and their occurrence is expected to be infrequent and transient.

Other species, including the reef manta ray (*Mobula alfredi*) and scalloped hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*), may also occur within the broader area, although these species are more typically associated with higher-quality coastal or offshore habitats. Within the Project Area, habitat availability is limited, and these species may only utilise the area occasionally or while moving between more suitable habitats.

Further information on each MNES species is provided in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 4.3.3 (Threatened Ecological Communities) Section 4.4 (Listed Threatened and Migratory Species) and Section 4.5 (Key Fauna Values) page 36 to 58**

Potential impacts to these MNES are also further discussed in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 5 (Potential Impacts and Mitigation) page 59 to 68.**

This assessment follows the Significant Impact Guidelines under the EPBC Act, with further details on MNES provided in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 6 (Significant Impact Assessment) page 75 to 84.**

No significant impacts are expected to occur to MNES as a result of the proposed action, and it will be managed as part of the national assessment process under the requirements of the EPBC Act.

3.2.2 Describe the vegetation (including the status of native vegetation and soil) within the project area.

The Project Area supports the following vegetation communities:

- A narrow and fragmented fringe of mangrove vegetation (approx. 20 m with a total area of 2,535 m²) associated with sheltered drainage channels and embayment margins. Mangrove communities (RE 8.1.1) averaging 3-8 m in height with a canopy coverage ranging from 20-90% are dominated by *Rhizophora stylosa*, with occasional occurrences of *Avicennia marina*, *Rhizophora apiculata* and *Excoecaria agallocha*.
- A modified upper bank vegetation fringe with exotic grasses, vines, ornamental plantings and invasive shrubs, with scattered native canopy species and small patches of coastal woodland and sea hibiscus (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*). Coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*).

No TECs are present within the Project Area as outlined in Section 3.2.1 above.

Further information is provided in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 4.3.2 (Terrestrial Environment) page 33 to 36 and in Annex B (Terrestrial and Habitat Mapping).**

3.3 Heritage

3.3.1 Describe any Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas or other places recognised as having heritage values that apply to the project area.

The following Heritage places are relevant to the Project Area:

World Heritage Areas – The proposed marine works associated with the Project (including dredging and part of the revetment and reclamation) will occur within the mapped boundaries of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA). These areas are listed for their outstanding natural heritage values and are therefore relevant to the Project. Although the proposed land-based works, including the vegetation clearing, road connection and stormwater connection works will occur outside the mapped boundary of the GBRWHA, the proximity of these works still warrants consideration.

National Heritage Places- For the purposes of this referral, the GBRWHA and the Great Barrier Reef National Heritage Place (GBRNHP) cover the same area and are listed for similar values, reflecting the natural heritage of the Great Barrier Reef region. As such, the GBRWHA is considered the most relevant matter, as all assessment findings related to it will generally also apply to the GBRNHP. See above for further description.

No Commonwealth Heritage Places overseas (e.g., European heritage sites, shipwrecks) have been identified within the Project Area.

See **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Annex F on page F-1.**

3.3.2 Describe any Indigenous heritage values that apply to the project area.

The Project Area is located on land originally inhabited by the Gia and Ngaro People. A site inspection has been conducted with the Gia and Ngaro People as well as a desktop search for the planning stages. No cultural heritage sites were located or highlighted, however, there remains a high risk of encountering unknown subsurface cultural heritage materials. To manage this risk, a chance find procedure will be developed and incorporated into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and mandatory cultural heritage induction for all construction personnel. Consultation with the Gia and Ngaro People in relation to cultural heritage will continue during Project design refinements and construction.

For further detail see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Annex F (MSQ Cultural Heritage Risk Assessment) on page F-1.**

3.4 Hydrology

3.4.1 Describe the hydrology characteristics that apply to the project area and attach any hydrological investigations or surveys if applicable. *

The hydrological characteristics of the Project Area are influenced by a steep, short-response coastal catchment draining towards Shute Harbour. Catchment hydrology is driven by runoff from elevated, densely vegetated terrain of Conoway National Park (approximately 200 m AHD), with flow conveyed via three main drainage lines that flow north to south. As these drainage lines reach the lower-lying coastal area, gradients decrease and flows become less defined, splitting around existing infrastructure at the Shute Harbour Logistic Terminal and adjacent car park (north of the Project Area), before discharging via the stormwater outlet into the Project Area. Local hydrology is further affected by tidal exchange and marine processes.

4. Impacts and mitigation

4.1 Impact details

Potential Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) relevant to your proposed action area.

EPBC Act section	Controlling provision	Impacted	Reviewed
S12	World Heritage	Yes	Yes
S15B	National Heritage	Yes	Yes
S16	Ramsar Wetland	No	Yes
S18	Threatened Species and Ecological Communities	Yes	Yes
S20	Migratory Species	Yes	Yes
S21	Nuclear	No	Yes
S23	Commonwealth Marine Area	No	Yes
S24B	Great Barrier Reef	Yes	Yes
S24D	Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas	No	Yes
S26	Commonwealth Land	No	Yes
S27B	Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas	No	Yes
S28	Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency	No	Yes

4.1.1 World Heritage

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	World heritage
Yes	Yes	Great Barrier Reef

4.1.1.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

Yes

4.1.1.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

Due to the proposed marine works occurring partially within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWhA), the construction and operation of the Project will directly impact such World Heritage Area. These impacts will result from:

- Direct disturbance to marine habitats through dredging, reclamation and piling activities, which could alter seabed structure and affect benthic communities.
- Indirect impacts on marine water quality due to sediment plumes generated by capital dredging and excavation within the Project Area
- Underwater noise emissions from piling and dredging, which may disturb or displace marine megafauna such as dolphins, turtles, dugongs, and crocodiles.
- Increased vessel traffic, which poses a collision risk to surface-dwelling marine fauna and may contribute to behavioural disturbance.
- Potential introduction of marine pests via construction vessels, which could alter local marine biodiversity and ecosystem function.
- Risk of accidental releases and marine pollution, including fuels, chemicals or sediments associated with construction activities and material transport
- Ongoing operational activities, such as maintenance dredging, which may continue to affect water quality and habitat conditions over time.

Further discussion of these impacts, in comparison with the significant impact guidelines, is provided below in Section 4.1.1.6.

4.1.1.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact?

*

No

4.1.1.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

While the proposed tidal works of the Project are located within the boundary of the GBRWHA, they are not expected to have a significant impact on its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). According to the EPBC Act referral guidelines for the Outstanding Universal Value of the GBRWHA (the OUV Guidelines), the values relevant to the Project include unique and varied seascapes and landscapes, marine turtles, inshore dolphins, dugongs and threatened/migratory birds. As such the criteria relevant to the Project include:

- Criterion (ix) - be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals
- Criterion (x) - contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The following describes the significant impact assessment for (1) Construction Activities and (2) Potential Barging Activities within the GBRWHA.

(1) Construction Activities

An action is likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a declared World Heritage property if there is a real chance or possibility that it will cause:

(a) One or more of the World Heritage values to be lost

No significant impact

The Project will see reclamation and capital dredging works partially occurring within the GBRWHA. Based on the values held by the GBRWHA, no loss of these values will occur due to the highly localised and temporary nature of the Project. Sediment mobilisation will occur temporarily; however, this would be expected to settle quickly after works finish and therefore no long-term impacts to water quality are expected. Sediment testing indicates that dredge material does not contain any contamination above NAGD guidelines with the exception of PASS. Capital dredging material will be handled in accordance with a CEMP to ensure that any discharge required for dewatering purposes will be seawater.

With regard to noise disturbance, due to the Project Area and the existing vessel traffic that occurs in the area, large presence of fauna that contribute to the Great Barrier Reef's heritage values are not considered likely and, hence, disturbance to the point of values being lost is not expected. Upon completion of the Project, the area will continue to be used as a recreational boating facility and therefore no change to risk impact to the heritage values will occur.

Through implementation of control measures listed in Section 4.1.1.10, significant impacts from water quality changes, noise or seabed disturbance in the GBRWHA are not expected.

(b) One or more of the World Heritage values to be degraded or damaged, or

No significant impact

The Project will have temporary and localised impacts to the GBRWHA in the form of water quality changes and noise disturbance during the construction phase. Disturbance of the seabed within a small area of the GBRWHA is not expected to damage any heritage values of the heritage places. Capital dredging works make up a relatively small portion of material to be dredged (maximum of 40,000m³) and will be undertaken as quickly as possible to minimise disturbance to vessel traffic, therefore any degradation of values would be expected to be temporary and highly localised during construction works only. As per above, dredge material will be managed in accordance with its physical and chemical characteristics and within DMP and CEMP to prevent contaminant release during treatment and retainment (if required) to the world and national heritage area.

Noise disturbance will also be temporary during construction works. The Shute Harbour area already utilised as a recreational and ferry operations area. The works, once operational, will see some re-direction and concentration of vessel traffic to the boat ramp facility, however marine fauna presence in the Project Area is expected to be low, therefore increased disturbance to fauna as a result of this concentration of vessel traffic would not be expected. Through implementation of control measures listed in Section 4.1.1.10, significant impacts from water quality changes, noise or seabed disturbance in the GBRWHA are not expected.

(c) One or more of the World Heritage values to be notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished

No significant impact

The Project will see alteration of the seabed of a small portion of the GBRWHA mapped area. This alteration is considered to be minor in nature and impacts from the construction aspect of the works will be highly localised and temporary only during construction. With appropriate mitigation measures in place as per Section 4.1.1.10, notable changes to water quality and quality of habitat provided to marine species of the heritage area are not expected in the long-term. Further, due to the Shute Harbours current use as a recreational boating facility and ferry operation, the Project is not expected to cause a notable difference in disturbance profile, especially considering the lack of habitat values for marine megafauna provided in the Project Area. As such, no significant impacts to be notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished to GBRWHA values are expected.

(2) Potential Barging Activities

An action is likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a declared World Heritage property if there is a real chance or possibility that it will cause:

(a) One or more of the World Heritage values to be lost

No significant impact

The Project may involve barge movements associated with the transport of sand for reclamation and surcharging. These activities would occur within the context of existing commercial and recreational vessel traffic within the broader Shute Harbour and Whitsunday region and would not represent a new or unique impact pathway within the GBRWHA.

Potential impact pathways associated with barging, including accidental material loss, marine pollution and vessel interaction with fauna that will be managed appropriately through a CEMP. As such barging activities are not expected to result in loss, degradation or notable alteration of the World Heritage values of the GBRWHA.

(b) One or more of the World Heritage values to be degraded or damaged, or

No significant impact

The Project may involve barge movements associated with the transport of sand for reclamation and surcharging. These activities would occur within the context of existing commercial and recreational vessel traffic within the broader Shute Harbour and Whitsunday region and would not represent a new or unique impact pathway within the GBRWHA.

Potential impact pathways associated with barging, including accidental material loss, marine pollution and vessel interaction with fauna that will be managed appropriately through a CEMP. As such barging activities are not expected to result in the degradation or damage to the World Heritage values.

(c) One or more of the World Heritage values to be notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished

No significant impact

The Project may involve barge movements associated with the transport of sand for reclamation and surcharging. These activities would occur within the context of existing commercial and recreational vessel traffic within the broader Shute Harbour and Whitsunday region and would not represent a new or unique impact pathway within the GBRWHA.

Potential impact pathways associated with barging, including accidental material loss, marine pollution and vessel interaction with fauna that will be managed appropriately through a CEMP. As such barging activities are not expected to result in one or more of the World Heritage values to be notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished.

Overall, the assessment demonstrates that the Project is not likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage of the GBRWHA.

4.1.1.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.1.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action.

*

As outlined in Section 4.1.1.6 above, no significant impacts on the criteria of the GBRWHA are expected to occur. Therefore, the proposed action is not considered a controlled action.

4.1.1.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

A range of avoidance and mitigation measures have been developed to manage potential impacts associated with the Project, as outlined in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 5 (Potential Impacts and Mitigation) page 59 to 68**. These measures reflect a best-practice approach to construction and operational management for marine infrastructure within the Great Barrier Reef region.

A key overarching mitigation measure is the location and design of the Project within a highly modified and already disturbed coastal environment at Shute Harbour. By concentrating development within an existing maritime precinct characterised by degraded and fragmented habitats, the Project avoids impacts to higher-value or more intact habitats present elsewhere in the region and reduces cumulative impacts to the GBRWHA.

The design has been refined to minimise the footprint of disturbance, with dredging, reclamation and tidal works confined to the minimum area required for safe navigation and infrastructure stability. The Project avoids offshore disposal of dredged material and limits disturbance to small, localised areas of low ecological value habitat.

More broadly, the Project has been developed in accordance with a commitment to best-practice environmental management, with potential impacts avoided or minimised through engineering design, construction controls and operational management measures.

All construction works will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and supporting management plans, developed in compliance with MRTS51 TMR's environmental management technical specification and MRTS52 TMR's technical specification for Erosion and Sediment Control under TMR's Environmental Management System which incorporates the following key measures:

- Confinement of dredging and reclamation activities to defined footprints, with staged works and appropriate dredging methodologies to minimise sediment disturbance
- Implementation of sediment control measures (e.g. silt curtains, containment systems, geobags) to limit turbidity and prevent offsite sediment dispersion
- Water quality monitoring (ie., pH and turbidity) during dredging, dewatering and discharge activities, with trigger values and adaptive management responses
- Marine fauna management measures, including pre-start observations, exclusion zones and soft-start procedures to minimise disturbance from piling and dredging
- Vessel management controls, including speed restrictions and operational protocols to reduce risks of marine fauna interaction
- Implementation of spill prevention and response procedures for fuels, chemicals and materials, including barge transport activities
- Biosecurity measures to prevent the introduction or spread of marine pests through vessel and equipment management
- Cultural heritage protocols for unexpected finds

Additional management plans developed to support the Project include:

- A Dredge Management Plan (DMP) to govern dredging extent, methods and material handling
- Management of acid sulfate soils (PASS) in accordance with an Acid Sulfate Soil Management Plan (ASSMP), ensuring appropriate treatment prior to dewatering or disposal

During maintenance dredging, management measures will continue to minimise impacts, including:

- Ongoing compliance with dredging and material management requirements for maintenance dredging
- Continued application of vessel safety and operational controls consistent with existing maritime use of the harbour

Overall, no significant impacts to GBRWHA are expected following implementation of these management measures.

4.1.1.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

No offsets under the EPBC Act are currently proposed. However due to the Project being undertaken under the *Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021* (Qld) (BOPGA Act), it is considered 'deemed to comply' with relevant approvals required under the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*, *Environmental Protection Regulation 2019*, the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014* and *Fisheries Act 1994* (as discussed in **Section 1.2.6** of this referral).

An independent assessment process will be undertaken to identify any environmental offset obligations that would otherwise arise under Queensland legislation and determine the appropriate offset response.

Where the independent assessment identifies offset requirements associated with impacts to Matters of State Environmental Significance (for example, Marine Plants), MSQ commits to implementing appropriate offset measures, including financial settlement offsets and/or direct offset delivery.

4.1.2 National Heritage

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	National heritage
Yes		Great Barrier Reef

4.1.2.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

Yes

4.1.2.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

Due to the proposed marine works occurring partially within the Great Barrier Reef National Heritage Place (GBRNHP), the construction and operation of the Project will directly impact such National Heritage Place. These impacts will result from:

- Direct disturbance to marine habitats through dredging, reclamation and piling activities, which could alter seabed structure and affect benthic communities.
- Indirect impacts on marine water quality due to sediment plumes generated by capital dredging and excavation within the Project Area
- Underwater noise emissions from piling and dredging, which may disturb or displace marine megafauna such as dolphins, turtles, dugongs, and crocodiles.
- Increased vessel traffic, which poses a collision risk to surface-dwelling marine fauna and may contribute to behavioural disturbance.
- Potential introduction of marine pests via construction vessels, which could alter local marine biodiversity and ecosystem function.
- Risk of accidental releases and marine pollution, including fuels, chemicals or sediments associated with construction activities and material transport
- Ongoing operational activities, such as maintenance dredging, which may continue to affect water quality and habitat conditions over time.

Further discussion of these impacts, in comparison with the significant impact guidelines, is provided below in Section 4.1.2.6.

4.1.2.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact?

*

No

4.1.2.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

While the proposed tidal works of the Project are located within the boundary of the GBRNHP, they are not expected to have a significant impact on its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). According to the EPBC Act referral guidelines for the Outstanding Universal Value of the GBRNHP (the OUV Guidelines), the values relevant to the Project include unique and varied seascapes and landscapes, marine turtles, inshore dolphins, dugongs and threatened/migratory birds. As such the criteria relevant to the Project include:

- Criterion (ix) - be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals
- Criterion (x) - contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The following describes the significant impact assessment for (1) Construction Activities and (2) Potential Barging Activities within the GBRNHP.

(1) Construction Activities

An action is likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a declared National Heritage place if there is a real chance or possibility that it will cause:

(a) One or more of the World Heritage values to be lost

No significant impact

The Project will see reclamation and capital dredging works partially occurring within the GBRNHP. Based on the values held by the GBRNHP, no loss of these values will occur due to the highly localised and temporary nature of the Project. Sediment mobilisation will occur temporarily; however, this would be expected to settle quickly after works finish and therefore no long-term impacts to water quality are expected. Sediment testing indicates that dredge material does not contain any contamination above NAGD guidelines with the exception of PASS. Capital dredging material will be handled in accordance with a CEMP to ensure that any discharge required for dewatering purposes will be seawater.

With regard to noise disturbance, due to the Project Area and the existing vessel traffic that occurs in the area, large presence of fauna that contribute to the Great Barrier Reef's heritage values are not considered likely and, hence, disturbance to the point of values being lost is not expected. Upon completion of the Project, the area will continue to be used as a recreational boating facility and therefore no change to risk impact to the heritage values will occur.

Through implementation of control measures listed in Section 4.1.2.10, significant impacts from water quality changes, noise or seabed disturbance in the GBRNHP are not expected.

(b) One or more of the National Heritage values to be degraded or damaged, or

No significant impact

The Project will have temporary and localised impacts to the GBRNHP in the form of water quality changes and noise disturbance during the construction phase. Disturbance of the seabed within a small area of the GBRNHP is not expected to damage any heritage values of the heritage places. Capital dredging works make up a relatively small portion of material to be dredged (maximum of 40,000m³) and will be undertaken as quickly as possible to minimise disturbance to vessel traffic, therefore any degradation of values would be expected to be temporary and highly localised during construction works only. As per above, dredge material will be managed in accordance with its physical and chemical characteristics and within DMP and CEMP to prevent contaminant release during treatment and retainment (if required) to the world and national heritage area.

Noise disturbance will also be temporary during construction works. The Shute Harbour area already utilised as a recreational and ferry operations area. The works, once operational, will see some re-direction and concentration of vessel traffic to the boat ramp facility, however marine fauna presence in the Project Area is expected to be low, therefore increased disturbance to fauna as a result of this concentration of vessel traffic would not be expected. Through implementation of control measures listed in Section 4.1.2.10, significant impacts from water quality changes, noise or seabed disturbance in the GBRNHP are not expected.

(c) One or more of the World Heritage values to be notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished

No significant impact

The Project will see alteration of the seabed of a small portion of the GBRNHP mapped area. This alteration is considered to be minor in nature and impacts from the construction aspect of the works will be highly localised and temporary only during construction. With appropriate mitigation measures in place as per Section 4.1.2.10, notable changes to water quality and quality of habitat provided to marine species of the heritage area are not expected in the long-term. Further, due to the Shute Harbours current use as a recreational boating facility and ferry operation, the Project is not expected to cause a notable difference in disturbance profile, especially considering the lack of habitat values for marine megafauna provided in the Project Area. As such, no significant impacts to be notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished to GBRNHP values are expected.

(2) Potential Barging Activities

An action is likely to have a significant impact on the National Heritage values of a declared National Heritage place if there is a real chance or possibility that it will cause:

(a) One or more of the National Heritage values to be lost

No significant impact

The Project may involve barge movements associated with the transport of sand for reclamation and surcharging. These activities would occur within the context of existing commercial and recreational vessel traffic within the broader Shute Harbour and Whitsunday region and would not represent a new or unique impact pathway within the GBRNHP.

Potential impact pathways associated with barging, including accidental material loss, marine pollution and vessel interaction with fauna that will be managed appropriately through a CEMP. As such barging activities are not expected to result in loss, degradation or notable alteration of the National Heritage values of the GBRNHP.

(b) One or more of the National Heritage values to be degraded or damaged, or

No significant impact

The Project may involve barge movements associated with the transport of sand for reclamation and surcharging. These activities would occur within the context of existing commercial and recreational vessel traffic within the broader Shute Harbour and Whitsunday region and would not represent a new or unique impact pathway within the GBRNHP.

Potential impact pathways associated with barging, including accidental material loss, marine pollution and vessel interaction with fauna that will be managed appropriately through a CEMP. As such barging activities are not expected to result in the degradation or damage to the National Heritage values.

(c) One or more of the National Heritage values to be notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished

No significant impact

The Project may involve barge movements associated with the transport of sand for reclamation and surcharging. These activities would occur within the context of existing commercial and recreational vessel traffic within the broader Shute Harbour and Whitsunday region and would not represent a new or unique impact pathway within the GBRNHP.

Potential impact pathways associated with barging, including accidental material loss, marine pollution and vessel interaction with fauna that will be managed appropriately through a CEMP. As such barging activities are not expected to result in one or more of the National Heritage values to be notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished.

Overall, the assessment demonstrates that the Project is not likely to have a significant impact on the National Heritage of the GBRNHP.

4.1.2.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.2.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action.

*

As outlined in Section 4.1.2.6 above, no significant impacts on the criteria of the GBRNHP are expected to occur. Therefore, the proposed action is not considered a controlled action.

4.1.2.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

A range of avoidance and mitigation measures have been developed to manage potential impacts associated with the Project, as outlined in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 5 (Potential Impacts and Mitigation) page 59 to 68**. These measures reflect a best-practice approach to construction and operational management for marine infrastructure within the Great Barrier Reef region.

A key overarching mitigation measure is the location and design of the Project within a highly modified and already disturbed coastal environment at Shute Harbour. By concentrating development within an existing maritime precinct characterised by degraded and fragmented habitats, the Project avoids impacts to higher-value or more intact habitats present elsewhere in the region and reduces cumulative impacts to the GBRNHP.

The design has been refined to minimise the footprint of disturbance, with dredging, reclamation and tidal works confined to the minimum area required for safe navigation and infrastructure stability. The Project avoids offshore disposal of dredged material and limits disturbance to small, localised areas of low ecological value habitat.

More broadly, the Project has been developed in accordance with a commitment to best-practice environmental management, with potential impacts avoided or minimised through engineering design, construction controls and operational management measures.

All construction works will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and supporting management plans, developed in compliance with MRTS51 TMR's environmental management technical specification and MRTS52 TMR's technical specification for Erosion and Sediment Control under TMR's Environmental Management System which incorporates the following key measures:

- Confinement of dredging and reclamation activities to defined footprints, with staged works and appropriate dredging methodologies to minimise sediment disturbance
- Implementation of sediment control measures (e.g. silt curtains, containment systems, geobags) to limit turbidity and prevent offsite sediment dispersion
- Water quality monitoring (ie., pH and turbidity) during dredging, dewatering and discharge activities, with trigger values and adaptive management responses
- Marine fauna management measures, including pre-start observations, exclusion zones and soft-start procedures to minimise disturbance from piling and dredging
- Vessel management controls, including speed restrictions and operational protocols to reduce risks of marine fauna interaction
- Implementation of spill prevention and response procedures for fuels, chemicals and materials, including barge transport activities
- Biosecurity measures to prevent the introduction or spread of marine pests through vessel and equipment management
- Cultural heritage protocols for unexpected finds

Additional management plans developed to support the Project include:

- A Dredge Management Plan (DMP) to govern dredging extent, methods and material handling
- Management of acid sulfate soils (PASS) in accordance with an Acid Sulfate Soil Management Plan (ASSMP), ensuring appropriate treatment prior to dewatering or disposal

During maintenance dredging, management measures will continue to minimise impacts, including:

- Ongoing compliance with dredging and material management requirements for maintenance dredging
- Continued application of vessel safety and operational controls consistent with existing maritime use of the harbour

Overall, no significant impacts to GBRNHP are expected following implementation of these management measures.

4.1.2.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

No offsets under the EPBC Act are currently proposed. However due to the Project being undertaken under the *Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021* (Qld) (BOPGA Act), it is considered 'deemed to comply' with relevant approvals required under the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*, *Environmental Protection Regulation 2019*, the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014* and *Fisheries Act 1994* (as discussed in **Section 1.2.6** of this referral).

An independent assessment process will be undertaken to identify any environmental offset obligations that would otherwise arise under Queensland legislation and determine the appropriate offset response.

Where the independent assessment identifies offset requirements associated with impacts to Matters of State Environmental Significance (for example, Marine Plants), MSQ commits to implementing appropriate offset measures, including financial settlement offsets and/or direct offset delivery.

4.1.3 Ramsar Wetland

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

4.1.3.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.3.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.

*

Not within a Ramsar wetland.

4.1.4 Threatened Species and Ecological Communities

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Threatened species

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Balaenoptera musculus	Blue Whale
No	Yes	Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	Yes	Calidris canutus	Red Knot, Knot
No	Yes	Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	Carcharodon carcharias	White Shark, Great White Shark
No	Yes	Caretta caretta	Loggerhead Turtle
No	Yes	Charadrius leschenaultii	Greater Sand Plover, Large Sand Plover
No	Yes	Chelonia mydas	Green Turtle
No	No	Dasyurus hallucatus	Northern Quoll, Digul [Gogo-Yimidir], Wijingadda [Dambimangari], Wiminji [Martu]
No	Yes	Dermochelys coriacea	Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth
No	No	Egernia rugosa	Yakka Skink
No	Yes	Eretmochelys imbricata	Hawksbill Turtle
No	No	Erythrorhynchus radiatus	Red Goshawk
No	No	Falco hypoleucos	Grey Falcon
No	No	Fregetta grallaria grallaria	White-bellied Storm-Petrel (Tasman Sea), White-bellied Storm-Petrel (Australasian)
No	Yes	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	Geophaps scripta scripta	Squatter Pigeon (southern)
No	No	Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail
No	Yes	Lepidochelys olivacea	Olive Ridley Turtle, Pacific Ridley Turtle
No	Yes	Limosa lapponica baueri	Nunivak Bar-tailed Godwit, Western Alaskan Bar-tailed Godwit

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Macroderma gigas	Ghost Bat
No	No	Macronectes giganteus	Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel
No	Yes	Natator depressus	Flatback Turtle
No	No	Neochmia ruficauda ruficauda	Star Finch (eastern), Star Finch (southern)
No	Yes	Numenius madagascariensis	Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew
No	Yes	Orcaella heinsohni	Australian Snubfin Dolphin
No	No	Petauroides volans	Greater Glider (southern and central)
No	No	Petrogale persephone	Proserpine Rock-wallaby
No	No	Phascolarctos cinereus (combined populations of Qld, NSW and the ACT)	Koala (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory)
No	No	Poephila cincta cincta	Southern Black-throated Finch
No	Yes	Pristis zijsron	Green Sawfish, Dindagubba, Narrowsnout Sawfish
No	No	Pterodroma neglecta neglecta	Kermadec Petrel (western)
No	No	Rhincodon typus	Whale Shark
No	No	Rostratula australis	Australian Painted Snipe
No	Yes	Sousa sahalensis	Australian Humpback Dolphin
No	No	Sphyrna lewini	Scalloped Hammerhead
No	Yes	Sternula albifrons	Little Tern
No	No	Tyto novaehollandiae kimberli	Masked Owl (northern)
No	Yes	Xeromys myoides	Water Mouse, False Water Rat, Yirrkoo

Ecological communities

—

4.1.4.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

Yes

4.1.4.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

The Project Area may potentially provide feeding, foraging or resting habitat for some of the identified threatened species. To assess the habitat values of the site for these species, benthic and terrestrial habitat assessments were conducted in 2026 by qualified ecologists. It was determined that the Project Area offers only marginal low ecological habitat for threatened species and is not considered critical to the survival of any federally listed threatened, marine, or migratory species.

The Project has the potential to result in indirect impacts on threatened species identified in the Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) results. A review of the PMST-listed species and the likelihood of occurrence assessment identified several threatened species as possibly occurring within the Project Area, based on:

- The MNES may occur or be relevant due to overlap with its broader known distribution, mapping extent or regional context; but
- No contemporary records, listings or mapped extents confirm presence within or immediately adjacent to the Project Area; and
- There is evidence reducing the likelihood of presence or relevance, such as modification or degradation of attributes, fragmentation, loss of integrity, or limited representation within the Project Area.

For further information on likelihood of occurrence assessment on MNES see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.01_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral' Section 4.4 (Listed Threatened and Migratory Species) on page 39 to 56.**

The species that were identified as possibly occurring include:

Critically Endangered and Endangered Birds

- Curlew sandpiper
- Eastern curlew
- Nunivak bar-tailed godwit

Vulnerable Birds

- Sharp-tailed sandpiper
- Red knot
- Greater sand plover
- Latham's snipe
- Little tern

Critically Endangered and Endangered Marine Turtles

- Loggerhead turtle
- Leatherback turtle
- Olive ridley turtle

Vulnerable Marine Turtles

- Green turtle
- Hawksbill turtle
- Flatback turtle

Vulnerable Mammals

- Australian snubfin dolphin
- Water mouse

Vulnerable Fish

- Green sawfish

For further information on the key fauna values within and adjacent to the Project Area **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral' Section 4.5 (Key Fauna Values) on page 57 to 62.**

The Project may result in direct (modifications of habitat) and indirect environmental interactions. However, based on ecological assessments, field surveys, and the implementation of mitigation measures (Section 4.1.4.10), these interactions are not expected to result in significant impacts to threatened species.

The potential impacts to threatened species as a result of the Project include:

- Disturbance to terrestrial habitat from excavation works and vegetation clearing along the foreshore environment adjacent to Shute Harbour Road. This area is considered low ecological value habitat and not considered suitable or critical habitat for listed species. No threatened terrestrial species listed above were recorded during field surveys.
- Disturbance to marine habitat from capital dredging, reclamation and piling works. This area is considered low ecological value habitat and not considered suitable, critical habitat or support important populations of threatened marine species. No threatened marine species listed above were recorded during field surveys.
- Temporary land-based water quality changes associated with surface contamination from accidental spills of hydrocarbons or chemicals during land based civil works. Given the absence of listed threatened species, no reduction in the area of occupancy of any important population is expected.
- Temporary marine water quality changes due to sediment plumes resulting from capital dredging will be managed using best-practice dredging techniques and are not expected to affect critical habitat. These measures are considered sufficient to avoid modifying, destroying, or decreasing the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that any of the listed threatened or vulnerable species would be likely to decline.
- Underwater noise from piling and dredging will be temporary and managed under the CEMP, with high-risk activities limited to daylight hours. Dredging may occur 24/7 with noise monitoring to minimise impacts. Given the industrial nature and low ecological value of the site, noise impacts on fauna are unlikely. Best-practice noise controls will be applied, and equipment maintained to reduce emissions. Therefore, noise is not expected to fragment existing populations or adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of any threatened species.
- Artificial light disturbance during construction and operational phases will be controlled to reduce spill into adjacent habitats, with no disruption expected to nocturnal behaviours or breeding cycles. This includes no expected disruption to the breeding cycles of listed species, which are not known to breed in the Project Area. The site is not known to house an important population of any threatened species.
- Vessel interaction during construction (including barging activities) and operational phases will be temporary and managed under the CEMP. As the Project Area does not support important habitat for marine turtles, dolphins or whales, these species are expected to occur only transiently, reducing the likelihood of prolonged exposure or repeated interaction with dredging plant and resulting in a low overall risk.

For further information on potential impacts to MNES see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral' Section 5 (Potential Impacts and Mitigation) on page 60 to 69.**

4.1.4.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact?

*

No

4.1.4.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

As outlined above, the Project Area provides only marginal habitat for listed threatened and vulnerable species and is not considered critical to their survival.

All potential impacts will be mitigated through the implementation of management measures outlined in Section 4.1.4.10. A full assessment against the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 (Matters of National Environmental Significance) is provided in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 6 (Significant Impact Assessment) on page 70 to 85**. Specifically, the following tables in **Section 6 (Significant Impact Assessment) on page 70 to 85** are applicable to the relevant threatened species:

- **Table 6.5 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for Critically Endangered and Endangered Bird Species) on page 76 to 77**
- **Table 6.6 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for Vulnerable Bird Species) on page 77 to 78**
- **Table 6.7 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for Critically Endangered and Endangered Marine Turtles) on page 78 to 79**
- **Table 6.8 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for Vulnerable Marine Turtles) on page 80 to 81**
- **Table 6.9 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for Australian snubfin dolphin) on page 81 to 82**
- **Table 6.10 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for water mouse) on page 82 to 83**
- **Table 6.11 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for green sawfish) on page 83 to 84**

Overall, the assessment demonstrates that the Project is not likely to have a significant impact on threatened species.

4.1.4.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.4.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action.

*

As the Project is not expected to have a significant impact on any of the identified threatened species that are possibly present within the Project Area, the proposed action is not anticipated to be a controlled action.

4.1.4.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

A range of avoidance and mitigation measures have been developed to manage potential impacts associated with the Project, as outlined in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 5 (Potential Impacts and Mitigation) page 59 to 68**. These measures reflect a best-practice approach to construction and operational management for marine infrastructure within the Great Barrier Reef region.

A key overarching mitigation measure is the location and design of the Project within a highly modified and already disturbed coastal environment at Shute Harbour. By concentrating development within an existing maritime precinct characterised by degraded and fragmented habitats, the Project avoids impacts to higher-value or more intact habitats present elsewhere in the region and reduces cumulative impacts to threatened species.

The design has been refined to minimise the footprint of disturbance, with dredging, reclamation and tidal works confined to the minimum area required for safe navigation and infrastructure stability. The Project avoids offshore disposal of dredged material and limits disturbance to small, localised areas of low ecological value habitat.

More broadly, the Project has been developed in accordance with a commitment to best-practice environmental management, with potential impacts avoided or minimised through engineering design, construction controls and operational management measures.

All construction works will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and supporting management plans, developed in compliance with MRTS51 TMR's environmental management technical specification and MRTS52 TMR's technical specification for Erosion and Sediment Control under TMR's Environmental Management System which incorporates the following key measures:

- Confinement of dredging and reclamation activities to defined footprints, with staged works and appropriate dredging methodologies to minimise sediment disturbance
- Implementation of sediment control measures (e.g. silt curtains, containment systems, geobags) to limit turbidity and prevent offsite sediment dispersion
- Water quality monitoring (ie., ph and turbidity) during dredging, dewatering and discharge activities, with trigger values and adaptive management responses
- Marine fauna management measures, including pre-start observations, exclusion zones and soft-start procedures to minimise disturbance from piling and dredging
- Vessel management controls, including speed restrictions and operational protocols to reduce risks of marine fauna interaction
- Implementation of spill prevention and response procedures for fuels, chemicals and materials, including barge transport activities
- Biosecurity measures to prevent the introduction or spread of marine pests through vessel and equipment management
- Cultural heritage protocols for unexpected finds

Additional management plans developed to support the Project include:

- A Dredge Management Plan (DMP) to govern dredging extent, methods and material handling
- Management of acid sulfate soils (PASS) in accordance with an Acid Sulfate Soil Management Plan (ASSMP), ensuring appropriate treatment prior to dewatering or disposal

During maintenance dredging, management measures will continue to minimise impacts, including:

- Ongoing compliance with dredging and material management requirements for maintenance dredging
- Continued application of vessel safety and operational controls consistent with existing maritime use of the harbour

Overall, no significant impacts to threatened species are expected following implementation of these management measures.

4.1.4.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

No offsets under the EPBC Act are currently proposed. However due to the Project being undertaken under the *Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021* (Qld) (BOPGA Act), it is considered 'deemed to comply' with relevant approvals required under the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*, *Environmental Protection Regulation 2019*, the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014* and *Fisheries Act 1994* (as discussed in **Section 1.2.6** of this referral).

An independent assessment process will be undertaken to identify any environmental offset obligations that would otherwise arise under Queensland legislation and determine the appropriate offset response.

Where the independent assessment identifies offset requirements associated with impacts to Matters of State Environmental Significance (for example, Marine Plants), MSQ commits to implementing appropriate offset measures, including financial settlement offsets and/or direct offset delivery.

4.1.5 Migratory Species

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper
No	No	<i>Anous stolidus</i>	Common Noddy
No	Yes	<i>Anoxypristis cuspidata</i>	Narrow Sawfish, Knifetooth Sawfish
No	Yes	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	Fork-tailed Swift
No	No	<i>Ardenna carneipes</i>	Flesh-footed Shearwater, Fleshy-footed Shearwater
No	No	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>	Bryde's Whale
No	No	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	Blue Whale
No	No	<i>Balaenoptera omurai</i>	Omura's Whale
No	Yes	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	Yes	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Red Knot, Knot
No	Yes	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Pectoral Sandpiper
No	No	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>	Oceanic Whitetip Shark
No	No	<i>Carcharias taurus</i>	Grey Nurse Shark
No	No	<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>	White Shark, Great White Shark
No	Yes	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Loggerhead Turtle
No	Yes	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	Greater Sand Plover, Large Sand Plover
No	Yes	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Green Turtle
No	Yes	<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	Salt-water Crocodile, Estuarine Crocodile
No	No	<i>Cuculus optatus</i>	Oriental Cuckoo, Horsfield's Cuckoo
No	Yes	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth
No	Yes	<i>Dugong dugon</i>	Dugong

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	Yes	Eretmochelys imbricata	Hawksbill Turtle
No	No	Fregata ariel	Lesser Frigatebird, Least Frigatebird
No	No	Fregata minor	Great Frigatebird, Greater Frigatebird
No	Yes	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail
No	No	Lamna nasus	Porbeagle, Mackerel Shark
No	Yes	Lepidochelys olivacea	Olive Ridley Turtle, Pacific Ridley Turtle
No	Yes	Limosa lapponica	Bar-tailed Godwit
No	No	Macronectes giganteus	Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel
No	No	Megaptera novaeangliae	Humpback Whale
No	Yes	Mobula alfredi	Reef Manta Ray, Coastal Manta Ray
No	No	Mobula birostris	Giant Manta Ray
No	Yes	Natator depressus	Flatback Turtle
No	Yes	Numenius madagascariensis	Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew
No	Yes	Orcaella heinsohni	Australian Snubfin Dolphin
No	No	Orcinus orca	Killer Whale, Orca
No	Yes	Pandion haliaetus	Osprey
No	No	Phaethon lepturus	White-tailed Tropicbird
No	No	Phaethon rubricauda	Red-tailed Tropicbird
No	Yes	Pristis zijsron	Green Sawfish, Dindagubba, Narrowsnout Sawfish
No	No	Rhincodon typus	Whale Shark
No	Yes	Sousa sahalensis	Australian Humpback Dolphin
No	Yes	Sternula albifrons	Little Tern

4.1.5.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

Yes

4.1.5.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

The Project Area may provide feeding, foraging and resting habitat and may also support transient use by migratory species moving between higher value habitats. To assess the habitat values of the site for these species, benthic and terrestrial habitat assessments were conducted in 2026 by qualified ecologists. It was determined that the Project Area offers only marginal low ecological habitat and is not considered an area of important habitat for any federally listed marine or terrestrial migratory species.

The Project has the potential to result in indirect impacts on migratory species identified in the Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) results. A review of the PMST-listed species and the likelihood of occurrence assessment identified several migratory species as possibly occurring within the Project Area, based on:

- The MNES may occur or be relevant due to overlap with its broader known distribution, mapping extent or regional context; but
- No contemporary records, listings or mapped extents confirm presence within or immediately adjacent to the Project Area; and
- There is evidence reducing the likelihood of presence or relevance, such as modification or degradation of attributes, fragmentation, loss of integrity, or limited representation within the Project Area.

For further information on likelihood of occurrence assessment on MNES see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.01_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral' Section 4.4 (Listed Threatened and Migratory Species) on page 39 to 56.**

The species that were identified as possibly occurring include:

Migratory Marine Birds

- Osprey
- Whimbrel
- Fork-tailed swift

Migratory Marine Species

- Dugong
- Reef manta ray
- Narrow sawfish
- Salt-water crocodile
- Australian humpback dolphin

For further information on the key fauna values within and adjacent to the Project Area **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral' Section 4.5 (Key Fauna Values) on page 57 to 62.**

The Project may result in direct (modifications of habitat) and indirect environmental interactions. However, based on ecological assessments, field surveys, and the implementation of mitigation measures (Section 4.1.4.10), these interactions are not expected to result in significant impacts to threatened species.

The potential impacts to migratory birds and marine species as a result of the Project include:

- Disturbance to terrestrial habitat from excavation works and vegetation clearing along the foreshore environment adjacent to Shute Harbour Road. This area is considered low ecological value habitat and not considered suitable or an area of important habitat for listed species. No migratory species listed above were recorded during field surveys.
- Disturbance to marine habitat from capital dredging, reclamation and piling works. This area is considered low ecological value habitat and not considered suitable or support important populations of migratory species. No migratory species listed above were recorded during field surveys.
- Temporary land-based water quality changes associated with surface contamination from accidental spills of hydrocarbons or chemicals during land based civil works. Given the absence and low

ecological value habitats for the listed migratory species, no reduction in the area of important habitat for migratory species is expected.

- Temporary marine water quality changes due to sediment plumes resulting from capital dredging will be managed using best-practice dredging techniques and are not expected to affect critical habitat. These measures are considered sufficient to avoid modifying, destroying, or decreasing the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that any of the listed migratory species would be likely to decline.
- Underwater noise from piling and dredging will be temporary and managed under the CEMP, with high-risk activities limited to daylight hours. Dredging may occur 24/7 with noise monitoring to minimise impacts. Given the industrial nature and low ecological value of the site, noise impacts on fauna are unlikely. Best-practice noise controls will be applied, and equipment maintained to reduce emissions. Therefore, noise is not expected to modify destroy or isolate an area of important habitat for a migratory species.
- Artificial light disturbance during construction and operational phases will be controlled to reduce spill into adjacent habitats, with no disruption expected to, feeding, migration or resting behaviour. This also includes no expected disruption to the breeding cycles of listed species, which are not known to breed in the Project Area.
- Vessel interaction during construction (including barging activities) and operational phases will be temporary and managed under the CEMP. As the Project Area does not support important habitat for dolphins, crocodiles, rays or dugongs, these species are expected to occur only transiently, reducing the likelihood of prolonged exposure or repeated interaction with dredging plant and resulting in a low overall risk.

For further information on potential impacts to MNES see **Attachment 'R.004043.003.01_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral' Section 5 (Potential Impacts and Mitigation) on page 60 to 69.**

4.1.5.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact?

*

No

4.1.5.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

As outlined above, the Project Area provides only marginal habitat for listed migratory species and is not considered an area of important habitat.

All potential impacts will be mitigated through the implementation of management measures outlined in Section 4.1.4.10. A full assessment against the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 (Matters of National Environmental Significance) is provided in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 6 (Significant Impact Assessment) on page 70 to 85.** Specifically, the following tables in Section 6 (Significant Impact Assessment) on page 70 to 85 are applicable to the relevant migratory species:

- **Table 6.12 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for Migratory Bird Species) on page 87 to 88**
- **Table 6.13 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for Migratory Marine Megafauna Species) on page 88 to 89**

Overall, the assessment demonstrates that the Project is not likely to have a significant impact on migratory species.

4.1.5.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.5.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action.

*

As the Project is not expected to have a significant impact on any of the identified migratory species that are possibly present within the Project Area, the proposed action is not anticipated to be a controlled action

4.1.5.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

A range of avoidance and mitigation measures have been developed to manage potential impacts associated with the Project, as outlined in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 5 (Potential Impacts and Mitigation) page 59 to 68**. These measures reflect a best-practice approach to construction and operational management for marine infrastructure within the Great Barrier Reef region.

A key overarching mitigation measure is the location and design of the Project within a highly modified and already disturbed coastal environment at Shute Harbour. By concentrating development within an existing maritime precinct characterised by degraded and fragmented habitats, the Project avoids impacts to higher-value or more intact habitats present elsewhere in the region and reduces cumulative impacts to threatened species.

The design has been refined to minimise the footprint of disturbance, with dredging, reclamation and tidal works confined to the minimum area required for safe navigation and infrastructure stability. The Project avoids offshore disposal of dredged material and limits disturbance to small, localised areas of low ecological value habitat.

More broadly, the Project has been developed in accordance with a commitment to best-practice environmental management, with potential impacts avoided or minimised through engineering design, construction controls and operational management measures.

All construction works will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and supporting management plans, developed in compliance with MRTS51 TMR's environmental management technical specification and MRTS52 TMR's technical specification for Erosion and Sediment Control under TMR's Environmental Management System which incorporates the following key measures:

- Confinement of dredging and reclamation activities to defined footprints, with staged works and appropriate dredging methodologies to minimise sediment disturbance
- Implementation of sediment control measures (e.g. silt curtains, containment systems, geobags) to limit turbidity and prevent offsite sediment dispersion
- Water quality monitoring (ie., pH and turbidity) during dredging, dewatering and discharge activities, with trigger values and adaptive management responses
- Marine fauna management measures, including pre-start observations, exclusion zones and soft-start procedures to minimise disturbance from piling and dredging
- Vessel management controls, including speed restrictions and operational protocols to reduce risks of marine fauna interaction
- Implementation of spill prevention and response procedures for fuels, chemicals and materials, including barge transport activities
- Biosecurity measures to prevent the introduction or spread of marine pests through vessel and equipment management
- Cultural heritage protocols for unexpected finds

Additional management plans developed to support the Project include:

- A Dredge Management Plan (DMP) to govern dredging extent, methods and material handling
- Management of acid sulfate soils (PASS) in accordance with an Acid Sulfate Soil Management Plan (ASSMP), ensuring appropriate treatment prior to dewatering or disposal

During maintenance dredging, management measures will continue to minimise impacts, including:

- Ongoing compliance with dredging and material management requirements for maintenance dredging
- Continued application of vessel safety and operational controls consistent with existing maritime use of the harbour

Overall, no significant impacts to migratory species are expected following implementation of these management measures.

4.1.5.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

No offsets under the EPBC Act are currently proposed. However due to the Project being undertaken under the *Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021* (Qld) (BOPGA Act), it is considered 'deemed to comply' with relevant approvals required under the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*, *Environmental Protection Regulation 2019*, the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014* and *Fisheries Act 1994* (as discussed in **Section 1.2.6** of this referral).

An independent assessment process will be undertaken to identify any environmental offset obligations that would otherwise arise under Queensland legislation and determine the appropriate offset response.

Where the independent assessment identifies offset requirements associated with impacts to Matters of State Environmental Significance (for example, Marine Plants), MSQ commits to implementing appropriate offset measures, including financial settlement offsets and/or direct offset delivery.

4.1.6 Nuclear

4.1.6.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.6.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.

*

The Project does not have a nuclear action.

4.1.7 Commonwealth Marine Area

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

—

4.1.7.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.7.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.
*

The Project is not within a Commonwealth marine area.

4.1.8 Great Barrier Reef

4.1.8.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

Yes

4.1.8.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter. *

While the Project Area is not within the boundaries of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP), it is adjacent. As such, the construction including potential barging activities associated with sand surcharging and operations of the Project will directly impact the GBRMP

These impacts will result from:

- Disturbance to adjacent marine habitats through dredging, reclamation and piling activities, which may indirectly modify seabed structure and affect benthic communities.
- Indirect impacts on marine water quality due to sediment plumes generated by capital dredging and excavation adjacent the Project Area
- Underwater noise emissions from piling and dredging, which may disturb or displace marine megafauna such as dolphins, turtles, dugongs, and crocodiles adjacent to the Project Area
- Increased vessel traffic, which poses a collision risk to surface-dwelling marine fauna and may contribute to behavioural disturbance.
- Potential introduction of marine pests via construction vessels, which could alter local marine biodiversity and ecosystem function.
- Risk of accidental releases and marine pollution, including fuels, chemicals or sediments associated with construction activities and material transport
- Ongoing operational activities, such as maintenance dredging, which may continue to affect water quality and habitat conditions over time.

Further discussion of these impacts, in comparison with the significant impact guidelines, is provided below in Section 4.1.8.6.

4.1.8.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact?

*

No

4.1.8.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

While the proposed tidal works of the Project are located adjacent to the GBRMP with potential barging activities within the GBRMP, they are not expected to have a significant impact on its environment.

All potential impacts will be mitigated through the implementation of management measures outlined in Section 4.1.8.10. A full assessment against the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 (Matters of National Environmental Significance) is provided in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 6 (Significant Impact Assessment) on page 70 to 85**. Specifically, the following tables in **Section 6 (Significant Impact Assessment) on page 70 to 85** are applicable to GBRMP include:

- **Table 6.3 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for GBRMP (Construction Activities)) on page 75 to 77**
- **Table 6.4 (EPBC Significant Impact Criteria for GBRMP (Barging Activities)) on page 77 to 79**

Overall, the assessment demonstrates that the Project is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment of the GBRMP.

4.1.8.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.8.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action.

*

As outlined in Section 4.1.8.6 above, no significant impacts on the criteria of the GBRMP are expected to occur. Therefore, the proposed action is not considered a controlled action.

4.1.8.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

A range of avoidance and mitigation measures have been developed to manage potential impacts associated with the Project, as outlined in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 5 (Potential Impacts and Mitigation) page 59 to 68**. These measures reflect a best-practice approach to construction and operational management for marine infrastructure within the Great Barrier Reef region.

A key overarching mitigation measure is the location and design of the Project within a highly modified and already disturbed coastal environment at Shute Harbour. By concentrating development within an existing maritime precinct characterised by degraded and fragmented habitats, the Project avoids impacts to higher-value or more intact habitats present elsewhere in the region and reduces cumulative impacts to the GBRNHP.

The design has been refined to minimise the footprint of disturbance, with dredging, reclamation and tidal works confined to the minimum area required for safe navigation and infrastructure stability. The Project avoids offshore disposal of dredged material and limits disturbance to small, localised areas of low ecological value habitat.

More broadly, the Project has been developed in accordance with a commitment to best-practice environmental management, with potential impacts avoided or minimised through engineering design, construction controls and operational management measures.

All construction works will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and supporting management plans, developed in compliance with MRTS51 TMR's environmental management technical specification and MRTS52 TMR's technical specification for Erosion and Sediment Control under TMR's Environmental Management System which incorporates the following key measures:

- Confinement of dredging and reclamation activities to defined footprints, with staged works and appropriate dredging methodologies to minimise sediment disturbance
- Implementation of sediment control measures (e.g. silt curtains, containment systems, geobags) to limit turbidity and prevent offsite sediment dispersion
- Water quality monitoring (ie., pH and turbidity) during dredging, dewatering and discharge activities, with trigger values and adaptive management responses
- Marine fauna management measures, including pre-start observations, exclusion zones and soft-start procedures to minimise disturbance from piling and dredging
- Vessel management controls, including speed restrictions and operational protocols to reduce risks of marine fauna interaction
- Implementation of spill prevention and response procedures for fuels, chemicals and materials, including barge transport activities
- Biosecurity measures to prevent the introduction or spread of marine pests through vessel and equipment management
- Cultural heritage protocols for unexpected finds

Additional management plans developed to support the Project include:

- A Dredge Management Plan (DMP) to govern dredging extent, methods and material handling
- Management of acid sulfate soils (PASS) in accordance with an Acid Sulfate Soil Management Plan (ASSMP), ensuring appropriate treatment prior to dewatering or disposal

During maintenance dredging, management measures will continue to minimise impacts, including:

- Ongoing compliance with dredging and material management requirements for maintenance dredging
- Continued application of vessel safety and operational controls consistent with existing maritime use of the harbour

Overall, no significant impacts to the environment of the GBRMP are expected following implementation of these management measures.

4.1.8.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

No offsets under the EPBC Act are currently proposed. However due to the Project being undertaken under the *Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021* (Qld) (BOPGA Act), it is considered 'deemed to comply' with relevant approvals required under the *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*, *Environmental Protection Regulation 2019*, the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014* and *Fisheries Act 1994* (as discussed in Section 1.2.6 of this referral).

An independent assessment process will be undertaken to identify any environmental offset obligations that would otherwise arise under Queensland legislation and determine the appropriate offset response.

Where the independent assessment identifies offset requirements associated with impacts to Matters of State Environmental Significance (for example, Marine Plants), MSQ commits to implementing appropriate offset measures, including financial settlement offsets and/or direct offset delivery.

4.1.9 Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas

4.1.9.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.9.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.

*

The Project is not a water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas.

4.1.10 Commonwealth Land

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.10.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.10.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The Project is not within Commonwealth land.

4.1.11 Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

—

4.1.11.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.11.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The Project is not within an area of Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas.

4.1.12 Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency

4.1.12.1 Is the proposed action to be taken by the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth Agency? *

No

4.2 Impact summary

Conclusion on the likelihood of significant impacts

You have indicated that the proposed action will likely have a significant impact on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance:

None

Conclusion on the likelihood of unlikely significant impacts

You have indicated that the proposed action will unlikely have a significant impact on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance:

- World Heritage (S12)
- National Heritage (S15B)
- Ramsar Wetland (S16)
- Threatened Species and Ecological Communities (S18)
- Migratory Species (S20)
- Nuclear (S21)
- Commonwealth Marine Area (S23)
- Great Barrier Reef (S24B)
- Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas (S24D)
- Commonwealth Land (S26)
- Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas (S27B)
- Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency (S28)

4.3 Alternatives

4.3.1 Do you have any possible alternatives for your proposed action to be considered as part of your referral? *

No

4.3.8 Describe why alternatives for your proposed action were not possible. *

The Shute Harbour region is constrained by a combination of physical, environmental and regulatory factors, which significantly limit the availability of suitable alternative locations for the proposed development. These constraints include steep topography, limited developable land, existing infrastructure, and the presence of multiple environmental and planning overlays across the broader Whitsunday region.

The purpose of the Project is to deliver upgraded and expanded recreational boating infrastructure to address a demonstrated shortfall in boating facilities within the Whitsunday region, driven by increasing demand from the local boating community, tourism and future requirements associated with the 2032 Olympic Games. As identified through the Queensland Recreational Boating Facilities Demand Forecasting Study (BMT 2022) described in **Attachment 'R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral', Section 1.2 (Background) on page 7**, incremental upgrades to the existing Shute Harbour boat ramp were not sufficient to address these capacity, safety and operational constraints, and therefore a new or substantially reconfigured facility within the Shute Harbour area was required.

Within this context, the Project Area has been identified as the most suitable and feasible location, as it:

- Is located within an existing, highly modified maritime precinct, avoiding the need to establish new infrastructure in less disturbed or higher-value coastal environments
- Provides the necessary sheltered, all-tide access conditions required to support safe and efficient boating operations
- Has sufficient space to accommodate the required ramp infrastructure, navigation area and associated car-trailer parking, which cannot be achieved within the constraints of the existing facility footprint
- Is situated outside the boundaries of the Commonwealth and State marine parks, enabling essential components of the Project, such as reclamation for the car park and associated infrastructure, to be delivered within a more achievable regulatory framework.

Accordingly, the selected Project Area represents an area that can reasonably accommodate the functional, operational and safety requirements of the Project while avoiding greater environmental impacts and regulatory constraints. Therefore, alternative options were not considered practicable.

5. Lodgement

5.1 Attachments

1.2.1 Overview of the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	R.004043.003.02_Shute Harbour_EPBCReferral.pdf Assessment to support the EPBC Act referral determination for the Shute Harbour Boating Facility	15/07/2026	No	High

1.3.2.18 (Person proposing to take the action) If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	DTMR Environmental Sustainability Policy.pdf Department of Transport and Main Roads environmental sustainability policy	01/10/2021	No	High
#2.	Link	Environmental processes manual https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/business-industry/Tec..			High

5.2 Declarations

✔ Completed Referring party's declaration

The Referring party is the person preparing the information in this referral.

ABN/ACN	54010830421
Organisation name	BMT COMMERCIAL AUSTRALIA PTY LTD
Organisation address	4000 QLD
Representative's name	Mackenzie Stacey
Representative's job title	Senior Environmental Consultant
Phone	0477926858
Email	mackenzie.stacey@apac.bmt.org
Address	Level 5/248 Edward Street

☒ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☒ Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. *

☒ By checking this box, I, **Mackenzie Stacey of BMT COMMERCIAL AUSTRALIA PTY LTD**, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to this EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. *

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

✔ Completed Person proposing to take the action's declaration

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual, business, government agency or trustee that will be responsible for the proposed action.

ABN/ACN	39407690291
Organisation name	Department of Transport and Main Roads, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)
Organisation address	4000 QLD
Representative's name	Chris Voisey

Representative's job title	Project Manager
Phone	0455088382
Email	chris.j.voisey@msq.qld.gov.au
Address	Floor 4/ 61 Mary Street, Brisbane Qld 4000

☒ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☒ Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. *

☒ I, **Chris Voisey of Department of Transport and Main Roads, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)**, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to the EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. I declare that I am not taking the action on behalf or for the benefit of any other person or entity. *

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

☒ **Completed Proposed designated proponent's declaration**

The Proposed designated proponent is the individual or organisation proposed to be responsible for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act during the assessment process, if the Minister decides that this project is a controlled action.

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

☒ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☒ Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. *

☒ I, **Chris Voisey of Department of Transport and Main Roads, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ)**, the Proposed designated proponent, consent to the designation of myself as the Proposed designated proponent for the purposes of the action described in this EPBC Act Referral. *

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

